

RETHINKING EU INTEGRATION

ALBANIAN PERCEPTIONS AND REALITIES

Tirana 2007



EMBAJADA DE ESPAÑA
EN ALBANIA



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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
II. RECOMMENDATION	15
III. SURVEY FINDINGS	19
III.1 Support for EU Accession	19
III.2 Expectations	29
III.3 Understanding Determining Factors of Integration	37
III.4 Perceptions of the EU	41
III.5 Information and Awareness	44
III.6 Analyses	57
<i>Albania and the EU: knowledge of various institutions</i>	58
<i>Albania's Integration Process</i>	63
IV. METHODOLOGY	68
IV.1 Survey Design	70
IV.2 Sampling Procedures and Fieldwork	71
IV.3 Limitations and Strengths of the Survey	72
IV.4 Sample Description	73
<i>List of Tables</i>	77
<i>List of Figures</i>	79
<i>Questionnaire</i>	79

Introduction

In June 2007 the Albanian Institute for International Studies (AIIS) carried out its fifth survey on Albania's integration to the EU. Whereas the previous four surveys aimed to gauge the perceptions, expectation and levels of awareness of those groups that constitute the elite of Albanian society this time it was decided to evaluate the attitudes and understanding of the ordinary citizens of Albania which will after all not only be the main beneficiaries of Albania's eventual accession to the EU but whose support is indispensable in order for the country to succeed in its accession bid. The previous surveys have revealed that even the elite groups of Albanian society that are better educated and informed hold serious misunderstandings and misconceptions on what the integration process entails and what Albania can expect from EU accession. These findings were quite disturbing in themselves but they raised an even more disturbing question: if the elite and better informed groups have such serious lack of information on the integration process what then can one expect from the ordinary citizens of Albania? How aware are they of the conditions and criteria the country has to meet – and the price it has to pay – to become a member of the EU? Though these questions have been relevant at all times, now they have assumed a new relevance given the signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement by Albania one year earlier. Whereas previously any reforms undertaken by the government were of little tangible effect for the population at large, the reforms needed at this crucial stage of Albania's integration are far more likely to affect all of Albania's citizens directly. This was also the main motivation behind the decision of the AIIS to change the target groups for its fifth survey and follow up study on perceptions and realities of Albania's integration.

Furthermore besides the increased interest because of the signing of the SAA other international developments led the AIIS team to believe that the time was ripe to test the knowledge of ordinary Albanians on integration. On the one hand there is the recent accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU and the prospect of Croatia – albeit stalled for the moment – to shortly join the Union. This means that at the moment Albania and the so-called Western Balkans of which it is a part, find themselves surrounded on all sides by EU member states. This in turn has raised the interest and expectation of Albanians on their prospect of joining the EU. The discussions on the absorption capacity of the EU have also not gone unnoticed and neither the so called *Europe's fatigue*.

The questionnaire used for testing the attitudes and perceptions of ordinary citizens differs somewhat from those used in the previous surveys. It has been relatively simplified in order to be more suitable to our purpose, i.e. surveying the perceptions and expectations of a target group that is less informed on the integration process. We hope that the data gathered in this project and the analysis based upon it will be useful in helping understand the views of ordinary citizens and hopefully in helping the Albanian government, the EU and any other relevant actors in shaping their policies and attitudes towards Albania and its accession bid. We also hope to continue with this project in years to come as we sincerely believe that information thus gained is of the outmost importance to Albania on its road towards EU integration.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The results of the survey show that support for Albania's EU accession is very high, consistent and that it cuts across social classes and categories¹. The overwhelming majority of the respondents, 93,8%, support Albania's accession to the EU and would have voted in favor if a referendum were to be held on the subject and the percentage was almost the same for both the better and less educated groups of respondents. The percentage of those who would have voted against EU membership in an hypothetical referendum was very low standing at 2,4%. Although this tiny percentage might indicate the beginning of skepticism or resistance to the accession process the numbers involved pale in significance when compared to the percentage of those who support Albania's EU integration.

The levels of support for Albania's EU accession are remarkable indeed if one considers that in other Eastern European countries that went through the same process, opposition or skepticism towards EU membership stood at much higher levels and that they grew stronger the closer the country got to its accession date. Croatia is a striking example of this.² There are

¹ The survey was carried out in Tirana, Shkodra, Elbasan, Vlora, Gjirokastra, Korça, Durrës, Saranda, Pogradec, Lezha. At first glance this might seem to imply that the survey has excluded the large portions of Albania's population that reside in the countryside or in other less important cities and towns. That however would be misleading. In the years following the collapse of the Communist regime Albania has witnessed massive movements of population, mostly from the villages and the provinces in general towards the larger cities – suffice it to say that the population of Tirana has grown almost fivefold since 1990-1991, representing almost one third of the country's population at the time of the survey. It would thus be fair to assume that the sample surveyed is representative of the Albanian population at large.

² Balkan Crisis Report: Drago Hedl: Croats' EU Enthusiasm Cools, Balkan Crisis Report No.520,08 Oct.04, www.iwpr.net

several reasons that can account for the results in Albania³. Thus there seems to be no clear understanding of the costs related to the integration process as yet. Until now the first effects of the Interim Agreement have only been felt by the state budget and not by the society at large. In the last six years the surveys carried out have revealed that even the business groups share very high levels of support for EU membership even though these groups stand to lose more from EU related reforms than ordinary citizens⁴. An additional explanation is that Albania's economy is in much worse shape than those of other candidate countries or aspiring member states. Albanians thus has far less to lose from EU related reforms or its eventual membership and far more to gain. Furthermore there are no actors that can mobilize society against EU membership and around which opposition to EU membership can gather and consolidate. Simply put Albanians see no alternatives to EU membership. Last but certainly not least, in recent years Albanian society has become more open and contacts and communication with EU countries have become more frequent and intense. Albanians have thus had opportunities to realize that there are benefits to being an EU member whether these concern the rule of law, better education, better living standards and of course freedom of movement. It was thus to be expected that such positive perceptions of EU member states would have positively affected the Albanians' views and support for the EU.

Not only do Albanians overwhelmingly support their country's integration but in their view the EU continues to be perceived as Albania's most important strategic partner with 93,3% of the respondents thinking that the government should consider relations with the EU as a priority. It is indeed striking that the percentage of those who would vote in favor of EU integration and of those thinking of the EU as Albania's most important

³ See Albert Rakipi, *Albanian Euroscepticism? - The wrong debate in the wrong place at the wrong time*, Tirana Times, 20.10.2006 at www.tiranatimes.com

⁴ It must be noted that among representatives of this group there are higher levels of skepticism and opposition to Albania's EU integration, but they are still far below what Croatia or other Eastern European countries experienced.

strategic partner are almost identical. However this importance is not just linked to the wish of becoming a member state, but also to the increased visibility of the EU as an actor⁵ in the Albanian political life in recent years as well as to the increased investments carried out by it. The US has also gained in importance when compared to previous years coming closely behind the EU, while NATO and the UN have lost some ground. The reasons for this somewhat increased importance attached to the US - which was at high levels to begin with - as a strategic partner are twofold. On the one hand the results were most probably influenced by the proximity of the visit by the US president George W. Bush – the first ever in Albania by a US president – at the time when the survey was carried out. On the other they relate to the US position on the future status of Kosovo. However it is only in the case of the EU that the respondents have been consistent in the importance they attach to it as a strategic partner for Albania.

It is also notable that while the respondents deemed relations with the EU to be of the outmost importance, they were not quite so enthusiastic about relations with countries in the region. Only relations with Italy were deemed by the respondents to be of an approximate level of importance as those with the EU and the US. Serbia for instance scored lower than all the others with more than half the respondents saying that the government should not pay any attention to relations with that country. That is perhaps understandable given the recent conflict in Kosovo and the tense situation surrounding the talks on its final status. Unfortunately the other Balkan neighbors of Albania also received very low scores although trade and relations with these countries have progressed significantly in recent years; a fact that shows that although regional cooperation is one of the most important aspects of the integration process the views of the respondents in this regard continue to be influenced by the often charged history between them. .

⁵ See Albert Rakipi, *EU single seat in the Security Council: too Kantian to be loved*, in Europe's Worl, No.4, 2006

When asked on the reasons for supporting EU membership freedom of movement came in first, followed by improvement of living standards in a distant second place. These figures raise an interesting question: do Albanians conceive of EU membership as nothing more than a visa of sorts and a ticket out of poverty? The answer seems to be ‘yes’ for the both parts of the question. Given the levels of poverty significant portions of Albania’s population live in the second reason is easy to understand⁶. That said this part of the question needs some clarification. Improvement of living standards was not high in the order of importance of benefits in the eyes of the respondents. It actually came last on the list, behind the need for strengthening the rule of law, democracy and the economy. The figures suggest a high level of maturity and a better understanding on the part of the respondents. They seem to expect EU membership to improve their living standards by helping create the right social and political environment for that to take place.

The first part of the question however deserves to be examined at more length. In all the surveys thus far carried out respondents have perceived freedom of movement as the most important benefit to be gained and the main reason behind their support for EU integration. This factor has constantly scored higher than economic development, living standards, democracy and the rule of law. On the one hand these results point out to an apparent misunderstanding on the part of the respondents be they the ordinary citizens questioned in the 2007 survey or the elite groups surveyed in the previous four. Freedom of movement, which can be translated as removal of visa restrictions, is not going to happen when Albania joins the EU but rather in the course of its integration process. At least that is the position of the Albanian government and EU representatives have often claimed the same. On the other hand these results are a poignant

⁶ This is especially true for the respondents that participated in this survey, significant portions of which were unemployed or pensioners. These are two of the social categories that bear the brunt of the difficult economic conditions and poverty in Albania.

reminder of the difficulties and the unacceptable, humiliating treatment Albanians have to go through to get a visa – without even the certainty of success – in order to be able to travel to EU countries. It is a real ordeal for all Albanian citizens regardless of social status: long queues, insults, degrading treatment, seemingly endless procedures, high commission fees, endless requests for documents and what not. Although this problem has often been raised in Albania, by politicians and the media and although EU representatives as well as representatives from member states have often promised improvements and facilitation of procedures, the results of this survey only confirm what everyone already knows: despite improvements in the control and management of borders and the issuing of certificates and passports by the Albanian government, little has changed for the better. There has been one development however that gives some reason for optimism in this regard. On the 18th of September the Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreement was signed between the European Community and the Western Balkans. The agreement makes it – in theory – easier to travel, it envisages lower fees and simplified procedures for certain groups. However given the fact that interpreting and ratifying this agreement is left to the discretion of member states it remains to be seen whether anything will change in practical terms.

The respondents show a high degree of objectivity and pessimism when asked on Albania's readiness to join the EU. Most, 82,8% said no. The reason behind this negative judgment – besides the obvious fact that it reflects the reality – can probably be found in the problems Albania is facing which are of a different magnitude than those of other countries – even neighboring ones – that are in a similar process of transition. (This point is driven home even more forcefully by the fact that most respondents think that Albania has progressed less than any of these countries in its integration process.) The relatively long time that has passed since the signing of the SAA also can account for this: the euphoria and optimism that followed that event has long dissipated and the respondents have become aware that instead of marking the end of the road, the signing of the SAA simply opened a completely new set of challenges for Albania.

One additional reason for this overwhelmingly negative judgment⁷ can also be found in the harsher social and economic conditions of these respondents.

To their credit most respondents also thought that Albania should not receive any preferential treatment from the EU by being allowed to join even if not ready. This seems to indicate a realization that it is the process of integration that will improve the situation in the country rather than the simple act of accession. However the fact that 39,4% of the respondents think Albania should be accepted even if not ready is worrying as it indicates a grave misunderstanding and a lack of local ownership⁸ of the process. This significant percentage of respondents thinks that the integration of Albania in the EU is simply decided in Brussels and that it is out of Albania's hands. The results also show that this misunderstanding is more present among ordinary citizens of Albania than it was for the elite groups of the previous four surveys where a positive trend had been observed with the percentages of those holding such views falling steadily.

An additional explanation for this result can be found in the pessimism respondents share on Albania's progress in its integration process. 6,6% think the country has progressed a lot as opposed to 14,4% who think it has not progressed at all. Even if these two extreme views are not taken into consideration⁹ the fact remains that the overwhelming majority of respondents think Albania has either progressed somewhat or a little. Given the way Albania has to go in order to catch up to other Eastern European countries – let alone the Western European ones - such figures can hardly be interpreted as optimistic. This is also confirmed when the

⁷ The figure of 82,8% is of far greater magnitude than that of the 2006 survey when only 49,1% of the respondents from the elite groups shared the same view.

⁸ See Albert Rakipi, *EU and the Balkans: the lack of local ownership process and Europe's dilemma*, Tirana Times, June, 2007 at www.tiranatimes.com

⁹ Although we have no data on the political affiliations of the respondents it was decided to take such extreme views with a "pinch of salt", as it were. It often happens in Albania – as in many other countries too – that opposition supporters tend to see everything in black, while government supporters tend to have a rosy view of events. Therefore, while not discounting them, one must be prudent in attaching such views too much weight.

respondents were asked on the likely year of accession. Although the single largest group showed a realistic expectation by choosing 2016 as the most likely year¹⁰ (and a further 12,1% made the rather strange and unrealistic choice of 2010, which smacks of wishful thinking more than an evaluation based on a reading of the situation) a very large percentage of the respondents shared the rather pessimistic view of 2020 or even after 2020 as the most likely time of accession. Thus lack of local ownership combined with pessimism and loss of faith in the progress made seem to have lead respondents to conclude that a change of heart in Brussels is Albania's best hope for joining the EU.

The reasons behind the pessimistic views become clearer if one examines the responses on the factors of integration. The respondents emphasized domestic factors and especially the need to fight corruption, the need to strengthen the rule of law and the fight against organized crime and the need for free and fair elections. This is somewhat surprising indeed given the shortages of electricity and water Albanians have had to contend with in recent years. The reason behind this can be found on the statements and emphasis placed on these factors by the Albanian government and EU representatives. In any case given the unsatisfactory achievements of Albania in the abovementioned areas – which are there for all to see – and given the repeated statements coming from EU representatives on the need for Albania to do more it is hardly surprising that the respondents do not think much of their country's progress.

Nevertheless although the respondents do not give economic factors their due importance the fact that they placed much less importance on factors Albania can do little to influence, such as the situation in the region or the country's religious composition are indicative of a better understanding of the process on their part. The low importance attached to the religious

¹⁰ There is no proper explanation on why respondents in all five surveys thus far carried out thought of the years 2015 – 2016 as the most likely for Albania to join the EU. One can only hazard a guess that these years are far enough in time as to represent a safe guess for the respondents without being unnecessarily pessimistic.

factor especially goes to the credit of the respondents. Only 16,1% of the respondents thought of it as being very important as opposed to 44,1% who attached no importance at all to it. This result once again confirms the religious tolerance that has characterized Albanian society and which has become especially important in our times when religious conflict and strife have become a very serious threat to stability and security indeed. This achievement and the experience of Albania in managing such harmony could well be the single most important contribution of Albania to the EU.

The study reveals that besides the lack of local ownership there are also serious misconceptions on the nature of the EU. Although a majority of the respondents do have a more or less accurate idea of what the EU represents and on how to best characterize it, very significant portions of them have either the wrong idea or a very simplified one. For instance many think of the EU as a military alliance or as best characterized by the motto 'Open to All' or 'United in Diversity'. The fact that an overwhelming majority of respondents support Albania's EU accession even though many do not correctly understand what the EU stands for goes to show one of two things: a) Albanians have such high regard for the EU that they would like to be part of it no matter what, or b) that Albanians would support their country's eventual EU membership in any case because they see no other alternative.

All considered the respondents from all age groups and education categories show relatively mature and realistic views of the integration process, although serious misunderstanding and misconceptions remain. That said it is often difficult to ascertain whether their realistic expectations are borne of frustration and pessimism or a better understanding of the process. In any case any optimism and unrealistic expectations caused by the signing of the SAA last year – which greatly influenced the responses in the 2006 survey – has dampened. The respondents have correctly identified many of the challenges that lie ahead, although it must be said that they repeatedly fail to give economic factors their due importance. However one can hardly blame them for this since even Albania's government and EU representatives have largely ignored these factors in

favor of more pressing – and noisier – political factors.

The misunderstandings and misperceptions encountered in the responses become easier to explain when one looks at the sources where the respondents receive their information on the integration process from. The main source was television, followed in a distant second place by the press, and the internet. All these sources have the ability to reach out to large numbers of people but they are not always reliable and that is especially true in the case of Albania¹⁰. Better qualified sources of information on the other hand, such as the EU Delegation or the government or NGOs, had not managed to reach the overwhelming majority of those surveyed. This situation is especially poignant for the government which in the eyes of most respondents bears the greatest responsibility for keeping the public informed. Many of the misunderstanding and misconceptions were shared by all groups of respondents, regardless of educational background. Nevertheless the assumption that underlined the whole survey, i.e. that the better educated respondents would be better informed on the integration process, was again proven right though it must be pointed out that at times the differences between the two groups were so slight as not to give much cause for optimism.

¹⁰ In the previous four surveys the representatives of the media showed that they were just as prone to misunderstandings as the ordinary citizens surveyed this year.

II. RECOMMENDATION

The study confirmed that the levels of support for Albania's EU accession are high. The Albanians seem as committed as ever to the European perspective of their country and they view the EU as their most important strategic partner. Nevertheless although there are some positive indicators that reveal a somewhat better understanding of the integration process and the challenges Albania faces, many misconceptions and misunderstandings prevail. The study also revealed a serious lack of local ownership of the process with large numbers of respondents perceiving the integration process as starting in Brussels and ending in Albania rather than the other way round. These results quite naturally give rise to a number of recommendations that should serve as warning or encouragement for all the actors involved in the process.

In the first place there are the high levels of support for the EU integration and the very high importance attached by the respondents to the EU as a strategic partner. Such levels of support are rare and they provide opportunities for the Albanian government and the EU which should be used by them while they last. Thus:

- The Albanian government should utilize the overwhelming support for Albania's accession to the EU to justify and implement reforms which would otherwise not enjoy popular support. The fact that 93,8% want to join the EU gives the government great leverage and room for implementing painful reforms.
- The European Union and its representatives in Albania should use such levels of support in order to play a more visible and assertive role in the Albanian political life. It should show the

will and determination to comment more forcefully and with more clarity on the state of affairs in Albania, without the ambiguity that has often characterized such interventions. Statements issued by EU representatives often pay more attention to being diplomatic than to conveying their message forcefully and in the case of Albania the EU has often shown a tendency to sacrifice principles for the sake of stability. We submit that the high levels of support the EU enjoys in Albania provide the EU with a golden opportunity for influencing political developments in Albania and this opportunity should be used to its maximum.

The study also showed that Albanians still have very serious problems with free movement and that they perceive it as the most important benefit associated with Albania's EU integration. Lack of progress in this area where much has been promised and little has been done has the potential to cause disillusionment and frustration. Therefore it is of the outmost importance for:

- The Albanian government to stop making promises for short term political gains. It is becoming clear that at least in the short term not much will change and raising expectations risks having a boomerang effect.
- The Albanian government should do more to address this problem not only by improving the control and management of borders and issuing of documents such as certificates and passports but also by pressing the EU and its member states more forcefully for relaxations in the visa regime. Additionally the Albanian government should do more in trying to address this problem within the framework of bilateral agreements. After all even if Brussels agrees to take steps towards relaxation, the final decision belongs to individual member states.
- The EU and its member states should show more flexibility. The difficulties all Albanians must go through in order to get something as basic as the right to travel are unacceptable. Failure to address this problem will be detrimental to the popularity of the EU. Now

that the Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreement has been signed by President Franco Frattini, the Portuguese Minister of Foreign Affairs and the countries of the Western Balkans it becomes all the more important for the EU and its member states to show that things are going to improve. Failure to do so would result in serious loss of credibility.

Albanians do support their country's integration in the EU but at the same time they continue to show misconceptions and misunderstandings on the integration process. The information they possess on the conditions and reforms needed to take the country to the EU as well as the information on the nature of the EU itself is often lacking. This situation cannot continue for much longer. Therefore it becomes imperative for all the actors involved to:

- Reach out to citizens through information campaigns designed to explain and elucidate the different aspects of the integration process and of what EU membership entails. Given the fact that many continue to perceive EU membership as the magical solution to Albania's problems, failure to do so may in the long term lead to opposition, frustration and even hostility on the part of the public.
- Do more to establish local ownership of the process. Such a step is needed if the government wants to enjoy the support of the population in the painful reforms it needs to undertake. Explain their costs and benefits and invite the public to participate because it has the right to. Imposed bottom-down reforms are bound to create resentment with the integration process.
- The government should not abdicate from its responsibilities in keeping the public informed and assign such responsibilities to often unreliable or interest driven actors such as the media. It has become clear from the responses to the survey that the overwhelming majority of respondents hold the government responsible for informing them and that misunderstandings on the nature of the EU and the integration process persist.

- Cooperate with local authorities, the media, schools, businesses in organizing ways of informing the public through public awareness campaigns, TV programs and documentaries, publications, translations, lectures and workshops in Tirana and in other regions of the country. The Ministry of Education should also take steps to establish a department of EU studies or at the very least MA courses on the subject. This would not only go a long way towards raising the levels of information but it would also supply Albania with a pool of well trained professionals that are needed in order for the integration to succeed.
- Carry out studies, surveys, analysis on the different aspects of the integration process, the challenges presented by the signing of the SAA and the reforms Albania need to undertake, and disseminate such information to the public at large.
- Assist NGOs, think tanks, institutes and study groups in reaching out to the public. Such organizations although they are better qualified sources of information on the EU are often faced with financial limitations that do not allow them to disseminate their findings and studies to the public at large.
- The EU Delegation in Albania should raise its profile and become more accessible and active in providing information on the integration process. The study showed that thus far this institution has hardly played a role in informing the Albanian public.

III. SURVEY FINDINGS

III.1 Support for EU Accession

As one might have expected support for Albania's EU membership among the respondents was high. An overwhelming majority of those interviewed (93,8%) would vote in favour of Albania joining the EU if a referendum were to be conducted on the day following the interview. Only 2,4% of the respondents would vote against, while a somewhat larger group (3,8%) was undecided. Unfortunately this is the first time an AIIS survey has been conducted that aimed to gauge the attitudes of the ordinary citizens of Albania towards the country's accession to the European Union, which means that there are no previous records in order to place the survey's findings in perspective. Nevertheless, although one must be careful when making such comparisons, it would be interesting to compare these results with those of the 2006 survey which aimed to evaluate the attitudes towards Albania's integration for categories of respondents which for all intents and purposes constitute the country's elite. Generally speaking the results are very similar; a fact that goes to show that support for Albania's EU future is general and that it cuts across social classes. There are however a few differences. The number of respondents supporting Albania's accession is somewhat higher amongst this year's respondents than it was in 2006 (93,8% as opposed to 92,5%). On the other hand the number of those who would vote against such a move is almost double that of 2006, standing at 2,4%, while the number of respondents who are undecided has almost halved standing at 3,8% (*See Figure 1*). One can only speculate as to whether this would have been the case in previous years had the same categories been surveyed, but it would be reasonable to assume that the signing of the SSA and the publicity that ensued has

somewhat raised people's expectations that the country might finally be taking some concrete steps that will make Albania's European dream come true. On the other hand the higher number of respondents who would vote against accession seems to show that a higher percentage of ordinary people – as opposed to the elites – have no faith in Albania's future in the EU and that the frustration at this seemingly endless process is probably higher amongst this year's respondents.

Question 11: If a referendum were held tomorrow regarding Albania's membership in the European Union, how would you vote? Would you vote for accession or against it?

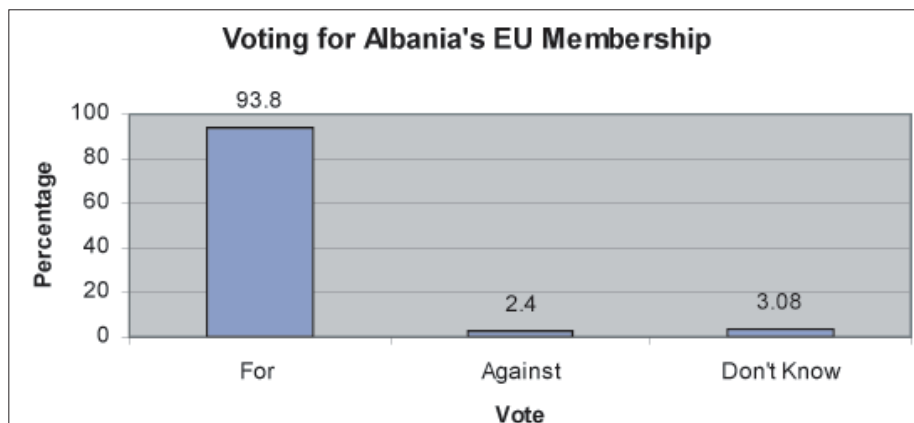


Figure 1. Voting For/Against EU Membership for Albania

Answers according to education categories reveal that the percentage of those who support the country's integration is almost the same in both the better and the less educated groups. The most interesting result is that the percentage of those who oppose Albania's accession to the EU is higher among the better educated respondents (2,7% as opposed to 2,1% for the "up to university" category). Although the difference is minimal, these figures might be seen as resulting from a better knowledge of the costs and consequences of the integration process amongst the respondents belonging to the better educated category, but this issue will be explored in more depth in the analysis section of the report. The number of

respondents who are undecided on the other hand is somewhat higher in the “up to university” group. Nonetheless the percentage of those who would have voted in favour is far higher than the percentage of sceptics or opponents (*See Table 1*)

Education Level	Voting for Albania's Membership in EU	Percent
Up to University	FOR	93,7
	AGAINST	2,1
	Don't Know	4,2
	Total	100,0
University and Higher	FOR	93,8
	AGAINST	2,7
	Don't Know	3,5
	Total	100,0

Table 1. Voting For/Against EU Membership for Albania by Education Level

The percentage of respondents who deem Albania's membership in the EU very important on the other hand is significantly lower than the percentage of those who would vote in favour of accession (*See Figure 2*). This might be interpreted as a sign that although the vast majority of respondents do favour Albania's accession in the EU, the interest of a significant portion of them (14,5%) in the integration process seems to have cooled off. Additionally this result could also be interpreted as an expression of frustration. Both results are perfectly understandable if one keeps in mind that Albania's integration process resembles a lengthy rollercoaster ride which unfortunately has had far more lows than highs. Another intriguing result is that while the percentage of “against” voters stood at 2,4% the percentage of those who do not find Albania's membership in EU at all important is far lower, standing at 1,1%. Once again, a possible explanation might be that a portion of the opponents of Albania's accession are voting “against” in a sign of frustration at the duration of the process.

Question 10: How important is Albania's European integration process to you personally?

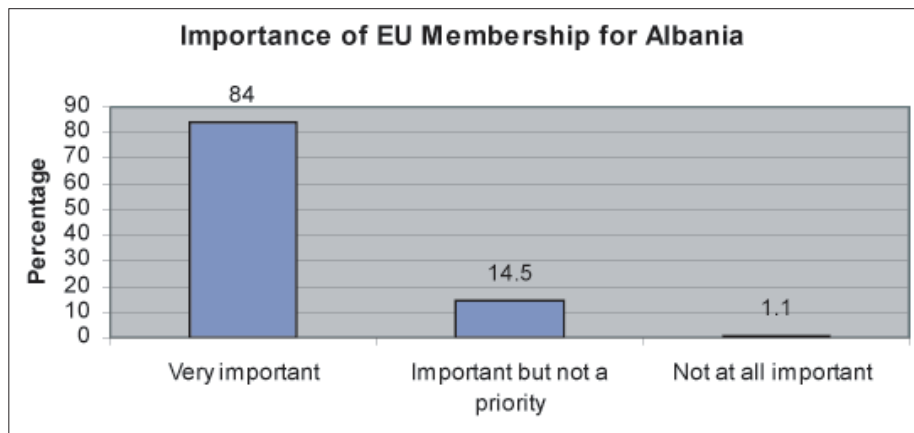


Figure 2. Personal importance of Albania's integration in EU (Q10)

In line with the results of the previous questions Albania's EU membership is deemed less important by the respondents belonging to the better educated category. 87% of the "up to university" respondents think of EU membership as very important compared to 81,2% of those in the "university and higher" category; a difference of 5,8 percentage points. The difference between respondents belonging to the two categories, who deem Albania's EU membership not to be a priority is similar: 10,6% for the less educated group as opposed to 18,1% for the better educated group amounting to a difference of 7,5 percentage points (*See Table 2*). Better awareness of the difficulties and challenges that lay ahead in the country's road to integration amongst respondents from the "university and higher" might account for these results.

Education Level	Importance of EU Membership for Albania	Percent
Up to University	Very Important	87,0
	Important, but not a priority	10,6
	Not at all important	1,7
	Don't Know	0,6
	Total	100,0
University and Higher	Very Important	81,2
	Important, but not a priority	18,1
	Not at all important	0,6
	Don't Know	0,2
	Total	100,0

Table 2. *Personal importance of Albania's integration in EU by Education Level*

The reasons behind the respondents' vote in a hypothetical referendum were once again explored in this year's survey; the second time this has been done in an AIIS survey and the first time this has been done in a survey exploring the attitudes of the ordinary citizens of Albania towards the country's integration process. In line with the results of the previous survey conducted in 2006, free movement is considered by the respondents as the main reason for voting in favour of EU membership, standing at 41,4%. 'Improvement of living standards' stands second at 32,3%, followed by 'strengthening of democracy and rule of law' and by 'better morals and responsibility in politics' (*See Figure 3*). The most striking result consists in the higher importance given by the respondents to the two highest scoring reasons when compared to the 2006 survey. 'Free movement' scored 4,4 percentage points higher while 'improvement of living standards' received a staggering 13,6% more votes than in last year's survey. 'Strengthening of democracy and rule of law' on the other hand has lost some ground (namely 0,6 percentage points). One might be tempted to conclude that this year's respondents were relatively satisfied with the strength of the country's democracy and the levels of the moral and responsibility shown by its politicians; a more reasonable conclusion however would be that these results reflect the differing priorities of ordinary citizens as opposed to the country's elite who find it a bit easier to travel to EU countries and who do

enjoy better living standards. The results also raise an interesting question: would the support for EU membership suffer if Albanians were granted freedom of movement in the EU?

Question 12: What would be the main reason you would vote For?

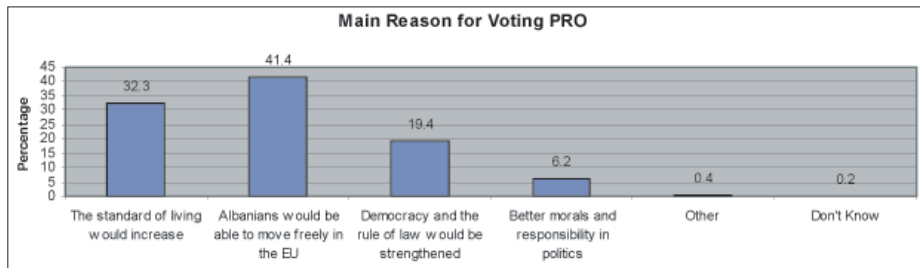


Figure 3. Main reason of voting for Albania's membership in EU

The opponents of Albania's accession to the EU form a tiny percentage of the general sample and the reasons behind their vote can be explained by the same mix of frustration and apprehension that can also be found amongst the populations of other countries that went through the same process though on a much smaller scale. The main motivating factor behind the opposition to EU membership is the fear that the Albanian identity would be endangered. Both the better and less educated categories seem to place the same importance on this reason. As far as the other reasons are concerned the less educated group placed more emphasis on reasons relating to the standard of living and the economy, such as a fear of higher prices and loss of jobs and businesses (See Figure 4).

Question 13: What would be the main reason why you would vote Against?

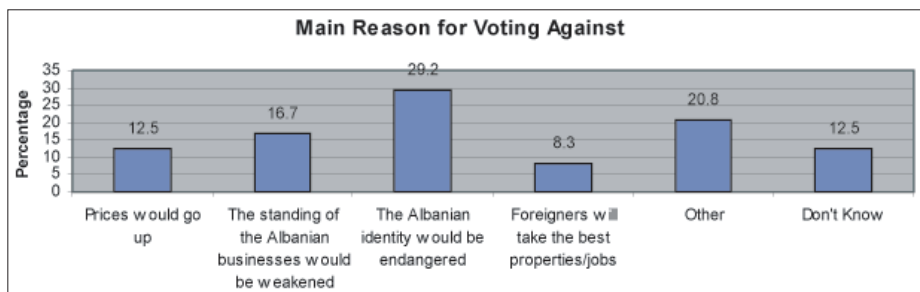


Figure 4. Main reason of voting against Albania's membership in EU

The survey also aimed to evaluate the importance Albania's government should place on strengthening its relations with various countries in the region or further a field and international organizations. The respondents were invited to answer this question by assigning grades on a scale from 10 to 1 where an evaluation of 10 - 9 was equivalent to a 'paying a lot of attention'; 8 - 7 as 'paying attention'; 6 - 5 as 'paying some attention'; 4 - 3 as 'paying no attention and lastly 2 - 1 as 'paying no attention at all'. Generally speaking there was no great surprise in the evaluations of the respondents. As in previous years, after Kosovo, respondents attached the greatest importance to relations with the EU thus confirming that the EU is seen as the most important strategic partner of Albania. The US, NATO, the UN also received high scores. There were, however, some interesting results. The US for instance scored a higher percentage of '10 to 9's, than the EU whereas in 2006 the EU scored much higher. The percentage of those who thought the government should not pay any attention at all was also lower for the US than for the EU. Nevertheless when the percentages of those who gave a grade of '10 - 9' and '8 - 7' were combined the EU scored 1,9 percentage points higher than the US. Relations with the EU thus continue to be perceived as a priority by Albanians and the percentage the EU received is almost exactly the same as that of the respondents who would vote in favour of accession in a referendum. That said the importance of the relations with the USA has also increased in the perceptions of the respondents, surpassing the UN and NATO. Keeping in mind that - for obvious reasons - Kosovo received a very high score one can surmise that the rise in importance of the relations with the USA is linked to the question of Kosovo's final status and the unwavering support of the USA for the province's independence; the visit of president George W. Bush has most probably also played an important role.

One noticeable result consisted in the low scores received by Albania's neighbours. The results are a reflection of the very complex and at times troubled relations between neighbouring countries in the Balkans as well as the not so significant commercial links between these countries and Albania. Thus one can safely assume that Kosovo is also the explanation behind the dismal score Serbia received with more than half the

respondents thinking the government should either not pay any attention or that it should pay no attention at all to strengthening relations. The other result of import is the fact that amongst this year's respondents Greece has received a very low score, far lower than that received for instance in 2006. Although relations with Greece are actually very important to Albanians because of the trade volume between the two countries and the high numbers of Albanian emigrants in Greece, several well-publicised incidents and events have probably influenced the views of the respondents. This also goes to show that the average citizen of Albania is more susceptible to such media campaigns than the better educated respondents interviewed in 2006. Italy on the other hand, which does not suffer from the same negative perceptions received a very high score.

Question 6: On a scale of 1 – 10 how much attention should the government pay to relations with the following?

	10 – 9 Paying a lot of attention	8 – 7 Paying attention	6 – 5 Paying some attention	4 – 3 Paying no attention	2 – 1 Paying no attention at all
EU	81,7%	11,6%	4,3%	0,7%	1,2%
NATO	74%	14,2%	6,7%	2,1%	2,5%
UN	73,7%	14,6%	7,4%	1,8%	1,7%
Italy	70,6%	16,9%	7,6%	1,8%	2,3%
Greece	38,7%	13,5%	13,3%	8,1%	25,4%
USA	83,4%	8%	4,1%	0,8%	3%
Turkey	54,7%	17,9%	12,7%	6,7%	7%
FYROM	44,4%	19,5%	16,7%	8,7%	10,1%
Serbia	17,9%	10,9%	17,8%	12,3%	40,4%
Croatia	31,6%	22,4%	22,4%	12,2%	10,6%
Montenegro	44,6%	22,4%	16,7%	7,7%	7,9%
Kosovo	88,1%	4,9%	2,5%	1,3%	2,5%

Table 3. Importance on Strategic Partners

Although the results of the survey leave little room for doubting the support Albania's integration in the EU enjoys across the population, as *Figure 5* shows most of the respondents are under no illusions as to Albania's readiness for achieving this outcome. This in turn seems to show a high level of maturity and objectivity amongst this year's respondents as well as a loss of faith in the progress the country has made. Thus the overwhelming majority of those questioned think that Albania is not ready for the EU; a sharp increase when compared to the results of the 2006 survey where only 49,1% of the respondents shared the same view. The reason behind this difference is probably to be found in the different, i.e. poorer, standards of living that these respondents enjoy. After all it stands to reason that the better one's life is the more rosy will his or her view of the progress made by the country will be. The number of those who do not know diverges sharply too: a mere 3,3% in 2007 as compared to 40,4% in 2006. These results are puzzling as they seem to show that those surveyed in 2007 have a much more realistic and objective view on the country's readiness for accession than last year's categories that were supposedly the best informed ones.¹

On the other hand the number of respondents who believe Albania is ready for EU integration has also increased to 14,0% in 2007 as opposed to 10,5% in 2006. One explanation that lends itself is that the signing of the SAA has caused some confusion among Albania's ordinary people, just as it did with the elite groups surveyed in 2006. On the other hand, given the relatively long time that has passed since the SAA was signed, it would be safe to assume that some of that confusion has dissipated and that people now do understand that in itself the signing of the SAA does not amount to EU membership. This would also account for the minimal number of respondents who do not know one way or the other.

¹ *It must be pointed out however that in this instance one can easily misinterpret pessimism for realism and objectivity.*

Question 14: According to you is Albania ready for EU Membership?

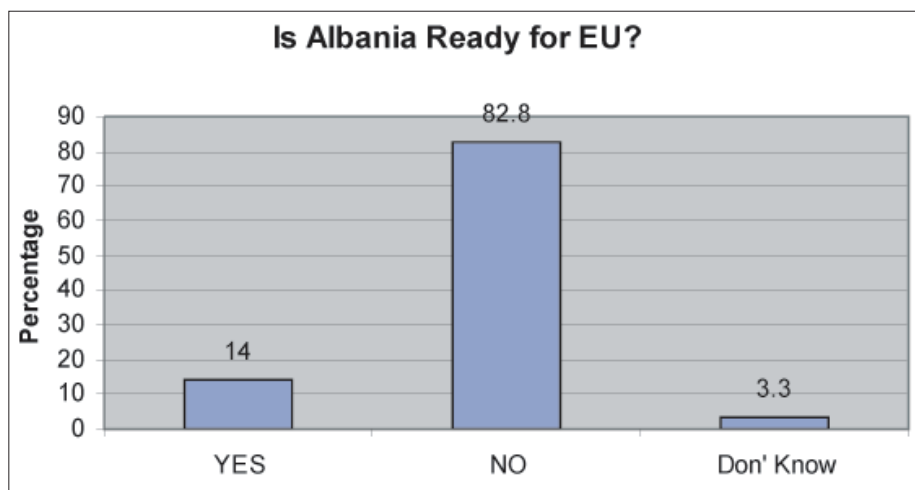


Figure 5. Readiness of Albania for EU membership

The responses to question 15 on the other hand were somewhat puzzling. The positive trend of increasing objectivity that was discerned in the previous surveys and in the answers to the questions discussed above seems to be confirmed this time too. Thus the number of respondent who believe that Albania should not receive any preferential treatment by being accepted before ready is higher than in 2006, standing at 52,7%; a 16,3 point increase when compared to 2006. But at the same time the percentage of those who believe Albania should be accepted is also much higher than in 2006, namely 39,4% in 2007 as compared to 24,1% in 2006. One possible explanation is that many of the respondents perceive EU membership as an end in itself and as a cure-all solution to Albania's problems thus showing a rather serious misunderstanding of what EU integration and membership entail. It also indicates a worrying lack of local ownership of the integration process. This group of respondents seem to think of the integration process and the eventual accession of Albania to the EU as something that is being decided in Brussels and that is not that dependent on actions taken by Albania.

Question 15: Do you think the EU should accept Albania even before it is ready to become a full member?

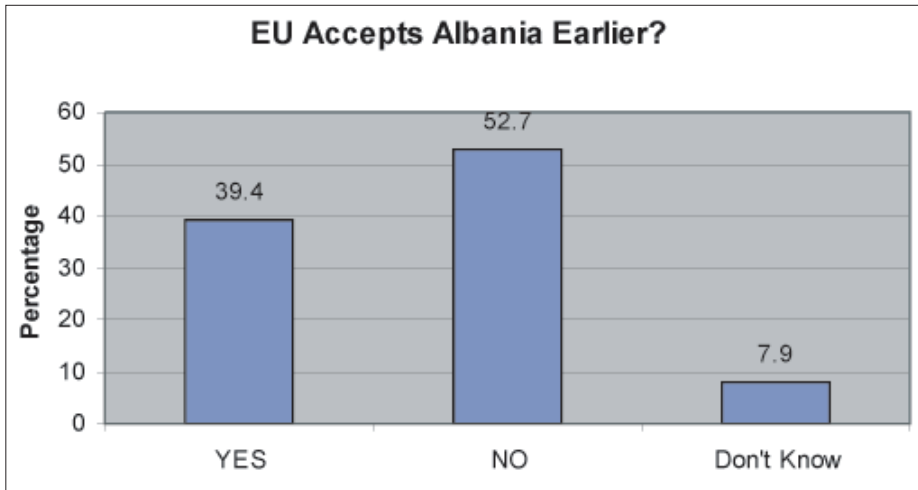


Figure 6. Personal views of the responders on EU's readiness in accepting Albania to become a full member

III.2 Expectations

Naturally the next line of questioning presented to the respondents aimed to evaluate their expectations concerning Albania's entry in the European Union. After all it is precisely the expectation of the benefits and costs of EU membership that shapes the respondents' attitude towards the country's accession. It must also be noted that the signing of the SAA, the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the union as well as the debate on enlargement fatigue and on Turkey's accession have in all likelihood played a role in shaping peoples' expectations. The survey aimed to evaluate the expectations of the respondents in three main areas: the benefits to be gained by Albania; the time when the respondents expected Albania to join; and the progress made by Albania in the integration process. In order to give some depth of perspective the respondents were also invited to compare Albania's progress to that of other countries aspiring EU membership.

In order to assess what the respondents expect to gain from EU membership they were invited to assign grades from a range of 10 – 1 to a variety of possible benefits in accordance with the importance of the benefits in question for the respondents. The grades were then divided as follows: 10 – 9 were equivalent to “very important”; 8- 7 equals “important”; 6 – 5 equals “somewhat important”; 4-3 “not important” and finally 2 -1 as equivalent to “not at all important”. The results largely coincide with the justifications the respondents gave for their vote in favour of EU membership in a hypothetical referendum. Freedom of movement was deemed the more important of all with a staggering 82,5 of the respondents giving it grades in the 10 – 9 range. Thus freedom of movement is not just the main reason for voting in favour of EU accession but also the main benefit respondents expect to gain. This reflects on the great difficulties Albanians have to face in order to do something as basic and elementary as travel to other countries². However, in contrast to the answers to question 12, strengthening of rule of law came second, albeit in a distant second place. The differences in the importance assigned to development of democracy, more moral and responsibility in politics, economic development and prosperity and wellbeing were much smaller, although it must be noted – and this is indeed a striking result – that “prosperity and wellbeing” received the lowest score of all. Furthermore, as if to leave no room for doubt this expected benefit received also the largest percentage of grades in the ‘4 – 3’ and ‘2-1’ ranges.

The most unexpected result is that although the second largest group of respondents would vote in favour of EU membership in the hope that the standards of living would increase, they deemed the “strengthening of the rule of law” as the second most important benefit to be gained in the event of Albania’s accession. This can either go to show that the respondents are so fed up with the unsatisfactory standards of the rule of

¹ 15 years after the end of the self-imposed isolation of the Communist regime Albanians find themselves under a new regime of isolation imposed this time from the outside and mainly from EU countries. Anyone familiar with the hardships an Albanian must go through in order to get a visa and be able to leave the country will understand why the respondents continually place such importance on this factor.

law in Albania that they judge to be on a higher level of importance than their living standard or – and this would imply a high level of maturity on their part – that they see the strengthening of the rule of a law as an indispensable prerequisite for attaining better living standards.

Question 19: In your opinion how much will Albania benefit in the following areas? Assign grades on a scale of 1 – 10.

	10 – 9 Very important	8 – 7 Important	6 – 5 Somewhat important	4 – 3 Not important	2 – 1 Not at all important
Development of democracy	52,7%	30,8%	12,5%	1,9%	1,8%
Economic development	53%	27,8%	13,6%	3,7%	1,6%
Prosperity/wellbeing	48,6%	28,9%	14,2%	5,3%	2,6%
Strengthening of rule of law	61,4%	23,3%	10,4%	2,6%	1,8%
Free movement in EU countries	82,5%	10,9%	4,3%	1,2%	0,9%
More responsible and moral politics	51,4%	28,5%	13,1%	2,8%	3,8%

Table 4. Benefits of Integration

As far as the question of a date for Albania's accession is concerned, the most notable result is that a majority of respondents (namely 37,0%) expect Albania to gain EU membership by 2015. This roughly coincides with the results of the 2006 survey where 36,4% of the respondents expected Albania to become part of the EU within 10 years, that is in 2016. The percentage of those expecting the country's accession to take place within 2010 (12,1%) is also much higher than the 2,8% of the respondents of the 2006 survey that expected Albania to join the Union within roughly the same time frame. These results would seem to suggest a certain 'optimism'³ among some portions of the respondents. That however is counterbalanced by a growing number of 'pessimists'.

¹ The 'optimists' are those respondents who believe Albania will join the EU either in 2010 or in 2015.

Although 23,6% think the country will join in 2020 as opposed to 33,1% in 2006, the percentage of respondents believing that Albania will never join the EU is higher (3,6% as opposed to 2,2% in 2006) as is the percentage of those believing that the accession will happen after 2020 (23,6% in 2007 as opposed to 10,0% in the 2006 sample). It must also be noted that the number of respondents who do not know is much lower in this survey than it was last year, standing at a mere 4,0%. (See Figure 7)

Question 23: According to you Albania will enter the European Union within which year?

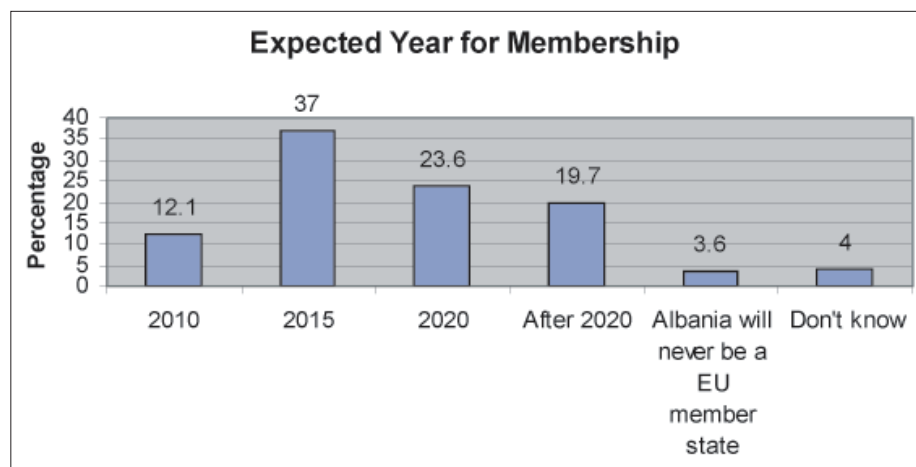


Figure 7. The time thought by the responders when Albania will enter in EU

According to Table 5 it would appear that the levels of optimism among male and female respondents are roughly the same. More female respondents than male ones believe that Albania will join the EU in 2010 (respectively 13,5% and 10,8%). On the other hand more male than female respondents believe that Albania's accession will take place in 2015 (respectively 37,7% and 35,5%). The percentage of 'pessimists' is roughly the same for both gender groups, although a slightly larger percentage of males believe that Albania will either join in 2020 or will never join at all. One would be tempted to claim that all in all the male respondents were slightly more 'pessimistic' than the female ones. However given the minimal differences and the fact that the gender of a small number of

respondents was not ascertained, one must for the moment refrain from making such a claim.

Gender	Expected year for membership	Identification No
MALE	2010	10,8%
	2015	37,7%
	2020	23,8%
	After 2020	20,2%
	Albania will never be a EU member state	4,0%
	Don't know	3,6%
	Total	100,0%
FEMALE	2010	13,5%
	2015	35,5%
	2020	23,7%
	After 2020	19,4%
	Albania will never be a EU member state	3,2%
	Don't know	4,7%

Table 5. The time thought by the responders when Albania will enter in EU; Gender

The ‘optimists’ are easier to discern from the ‘pessimists’ when the sample is divided according to the respondents’ age. As can be seen from Table 6 the two older groups are more ‘optimistic’ than the younger ones. 43,6% of the 35 -45 age group and 42,3% of the 46 and older group believe Albania will join the EU in 2015. All in all more than half the respondents belonging to the abovementioned groups can be classified as ‘optimists’. The opposite is true for the younger groups where the corresponding percentages are significantly lower. At the same time the youngest and oldest of the groups have the highest percentage of die-hard ‘pessimists’ who believe Albania will never become part of the EU. That said, it is clear that those who believe that Albania’s accession will take part in 2015 form the single largest group in each of the age groups, a fact that goes to show that the respondents’ expectations are becoming more realistic.

Expected year for membership	Age Group			
	18-24	25-35	36-45	46 and older
2010	13,3	9,3	11,2	14,1
2015	30,8	36,4	43,6	42,3
2020	23,4	25,9	26,8	18,3
After 2020	23,2	19,8	15,1	17,8
Albania will never be a EU member state	5,1	2,4	1,7	4,2
Don't know	4,2	6,1	1,7	3,3
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Table 6. The time thought by the responders when Albania will enter in EU; Age Group

Lastly the classification of the respondents according to their employment status yielded some striking results: the pensioners were by far the most 'optimistic' of the groups followed by the employed respondents in a rather distant second place. The students were the most 'pessimistic' followed by the unemployed respondents. At the same time the highest percentage of those believing Albania will never join the EU were also pensioners (4,7%).

Expected year for membership	Current Employment Status			
	Employed	Unemployed	Student	Pensioner
2010	12,3	10,1	11,8	18,6
2015	38,5	35,5	31,1	53,5
2020	23,3	27,2	23,7	11,6
After 2020	18,6	18,9	24,6	11,6
Albania will never be a EU member state	3,3	3,6	4,4	4,7
Don't know	4,0	4,7	4,4	
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Table 7. The time thought by the responders when Albania will enter in EU; Current Employment Status

It stands to reason that the respondents' expectations on the date when Albania might join the EU should be closely linked to their assessment of the progress the country has made in its integration process. However, given the fact that a considerable percentage of the respondents believe Albania should be admitted in the EU even if not ready, one must be careful in establishing such a link. Furthermore it is a well known phenomenon in Albania that party loyalists, whether from the ruling parties or from the opposition tend to have their views and responses influenced by their political affiliations. Thus even though we do not possess any information on the political beliefs of respondents one must be careful in not attaching undue importance to the 6,6% of those interviewed think Albania has made a lot of progress and those 14,4% who think that the country has made no progress at all. Nevertheless the largest percentage of respondents believes that the country has made some progress - a feeling no doubt encouraged by the signing of the SAA – while the next largest group thinks that little progress has been made. All in all one can say that the respondents do not share a very enthusiastic view of Albania's progress and that if these results are combined with the expected time of accession, it becomes clear that the pessimists prevail.

Question 16: According to you how much has Albania progressed in its integration process compared to last year?

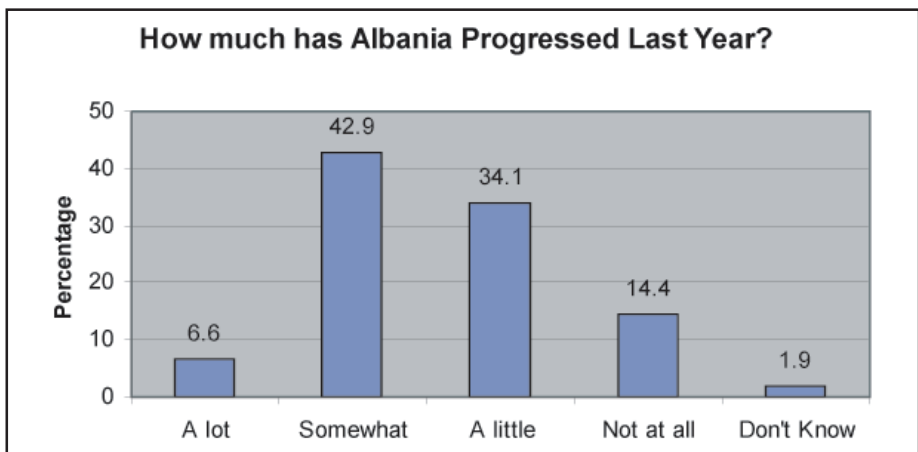


Figure 8. Evaluation of the progress made by Albania towards EU integration

The pessimism noticed in the answers to the previous question finds further confirmation in the answers to question 17 which make for depressing reading: as far as the respondents are concerned Albania lags behind every single country in the broader Balkan region that aspires to join the EU. Even Serbia or Bosnia-Herzegovina which face very serious difficulties in their accession bid were deemed to have made more progress than Albania. Some of the answers such as on Croatia and Turkey seem to show that the respondents have a good level of knowledge of the EU integration process in general; others, such as the one on Serbia can better be read as a sign of frustration at the slow progress Albania is making. The political situation in Albania at the time of the survey and the criticism coming out from EU representatives might be an additional explanation behind these results.

Question 17: Do you think Albania has progressed in its European integration process than the following?

Albania has progressed better than						
	FYROM	Croatia	Serbia	Bosnia & Herzegovina	Montenegro	Turkey
YES	23,6	9,2	39,1	38,7	25,2	14,2
NO	65,0	81,3	51,0	45,8	65,4	78,6
Don't Know	11,4	9,5	10,0	15,6	9,4	7,2
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Table 8. Views of the responders on Albania's progress better than various countries towards EU integration

III.3 Understanding Determining Factors of Integration

The results concerning the importance of different factors in Albania's integration were generally in line with those of last year's survey. A grading system of 10 -1 was used where 10-9 was equivalent to very important, 8 -7 important, 6-5 somewhat important, 4-3 not important and 2- 1 not important at all. The five most important factors were the same as last year although the order of importance has changed; in any case it must also be noted that the differences in the percentage points received by these factors were minimal. Corruption was deemed to be the most important factor of all amongst this year's respondents with 94,9% of them evaluating it as very important or important. The need for free and fair elections came second as opposed to the third place it occupied in 2006, and it must also be said that this factor received the lowest percentage of not important or not at all important votes (a mere 2%). The fact that this factor was judged to be more important than other factors which have a much more direct impact in the lives of those interviewed probably owes to the constant bickering and threat of instability that have unfortunately dominated the Albanian political scene whenever elections approach. One can also assume that the sharp warnings issued by the EU on the need for free and fair elections as a prerequisite for EU membership have influenced the views of the respondents. Organized crime and trafficking and failure of the rule of law came third and fourth scoring respectively 93% and 92,6% if the scores in the very important and important ranges are combined. Albanian politics came in fifth place, but if one considers that the free elections and rule of law factors are closely linked to the country's politics it would be reasonable to conclude that the respondents judged the factors of a political nature to be the most important ones; a fact that should serve as a warning to Albania's political class. It is also notable that as in previous surveys this year's respondents placed far more emphasis on domestic rather than external factors. The explanation for these results is probably twofold: they show a high level of maturity on the part of the respondents and an awareness of the importance the EU places on these factors. As shown in the responses to

question 14, a majority of the respondents do not think Albania is ready for EU membership. This combined with repeated declarations by EU representatives that Albanian politicians must get their house in order if they want their country to join have apparently left their mark on the respondents. It also explains why the situation in the region came one before last: rightly or wrongly the respondents seem to believe that the EU will judge Albania on its own merit, regardless of the prevailing situation in the region. On the other hand the relatively low importance placed on decentralisation as a factor of integration can probably be explained by the fact that this factor is of a far more technical and of a less tangible nature than the first five for the respondents; it has also received far less publicity than the top five factors. A surprising result though is the relatively low importance placed by respondents on the situation of Albania's economy. This shows that there is a rather serious misunderstanding on the importance the EU places on the economical situation of aspiring members. However this relative "indifference" towards economical issues has been a constant in the replies of the respondents to a number of questions in the survey questionnaire.

On the religious factor there is a split on the part of those interviewed. More than half judged it to be either not important or not important at all; a fact that suggests that the current discussions on Turkey's possible accession to the EU have not been seen by the majority of the respondents as having any serious implications for Albania. However roughly one third of the respondents did judge religion to be an important or very important factor – and a further 14,4% deemed it somewhat important – demonstrating a concern on the part of a these respondents that the religious make up of Albania might have a negative impact on Albania's accession bid. Nevertheless the fact that the majority of those interviewed placed religion very low in the scale of importance seems to confirm what has always been one of the most positive and remarkable characteristic of Albanian society: its religious tolerance. It would be tempting to conclude that since Albanians do not assign any importance to religious differences amongst them, they expect no less from the EU.

Question 20: Albania's accession to the EU depends on many factors. According to you how important are the following factors?

	10 – 9 Very important	8 – 7 Important	6 – 5 Somewhat important	4 – 3 Not important	2 – 1 Not at all important
Albanian politics	80,8%	9,9%	3,7%	1,4%	3,8%
Albanian economy	65%	20,3%	9,4%	2%	2,8%
Situation in the region	40,5%	26,5%	15,1%	8,7%	8,6%
Religious Composition	16,1%	12%	14,4%	12,8%	44,1%
Corruption	89,8%	5,1%	1,2%	0,3%	3,1%
Progress of decentralisation process	43,9%	28,6%	21,8%	3,1%	2,3%
Organized crime and trafficking	81,8%	10,1%	4%	1,7%	2,1%
Dysfunctional rule of law	83%	9,6%	3,5%	1,2%	2,2%
Free and fair elections	84,1%	9,9%	3,3%	0,6%	1,4%

Table 9. Importance of Factors of Accession

Question 18 was in many ways similar as well as complementary to question 20, but this time the respondents were invited to choose a single area where Albania needs to focus in order to progress in the integration process, in other words the respondents were asked to prioritize. The need to fight corruption and organized crime came first by a long way with 43,4% of the votes. Given the emphasis the EU and the Albanian government – which actually came to power on an anti-corruption platform – have placed on these factors the result is hardly surprising. As mentioned previously this fact probably reflects the frustration of the average citizens of Albania at the widespread corruption in their midst and at the serious

threat organised crime poses for the country. Nevertheless the issue becomes somewhat more confused if one considers that only 5,6% of the respondents thought that the country should focus on the reform of the legal system. Corruption and organized crime are after all to a great extent the symptoms of a malfunctioning legal system and without reforming the legal system the fight against corruption and organised crime is bound to remain in the realm of political rhetoric and propaganda. A possible explanation is that while corruption has a direct effect on the lives of the respondents, reforms in the legal system – just as decentralisation (0,9%) – are wrongly perceived by the respondents as more remote and abstract issues that do not exert such a direct influence in their lives.

The fact that only roughly one third of the respondent thought Albania should focus on economic development, besides confirming a pattern that can be discerned throughout this survey, can be attributed to the surprisingly low level of attention this factor has received from the Albanian media, EU representatives and Albanian politicians. Often it has been marginalised or even excluded in favour of discussions that play better with the electorate such as the need for political reforms and the fight against corruption. An additional explanation would be that the respondents actually see Albania's EU membership as the solution to its economical problems. (The accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the Union might – rightly or wrongly - have given some credence to such beliefs.) The same explanation also accounts for the low percentage of respondents that thought Albania should focus on improving its citizens' living standards. The last and remarkable result consists in the low score received by the election process as an area where Albania should focus its efforts. This would seem to imply a belief that Albania has improved its election process; a feeling no doubt encouraged if not by the general elections in 2005 then by the local elections of February 2007. The standards of those elections go beyond the scope of this report, but it can be assumed that the mere fact that a government in power can lose elections is perceived by the respondents as a sign of progress.

Question 18: In which of these areas should Albania focus more in order to be integrated in the EU?

Albania needs to focus more for EU integration	Percent
Economic development	32,1%
War on corruption and organized crime	43,4%
Improvement of the living standard	14,2%
Reforms in the legal system	5,6%
Election processes	2,5%
Decentralization	,9%
Other	,1%
Don't Know	1,1%
Total	100,0%

Table 10. Personal views of specific areas where Albania should focus mostly

III.4 Perceptions of the EU

Thus far it has become clear that the majority of the respondents support Albania's accession to the EU, what they expect from it, what opinions they hold on their country's progress in the integration process as well as in which areas they think Albania should focus more in order to achieve membership. What has not been explored thus far however is the perception of the respondents on the EU, what kind of organization they think they want Albania to be a part of.

In questions 8 and 9 the respondents were therefore asked to give their opinion on the nature of the EU and on the ideals or principles upon which the Union was founded. In line with our assumption that this year's respondent are less informed than the categories surveyed in previous years the questions were somewhat simplified, the choices more limited and general in nature.

Thus in the replies to question 8 the smallest group of respondents (if the 2% who does not know one way or the other is discounted) thought of the EU as a military alliance (13,2%). Although small this result points to a lack of information and a misunderstanding of the nature of the EU on the part of this group. The participation of military contingents from EU member states in the military efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, the

discussion on the need to protect Europe from the threat of terrorism and the possibility of an EU role in Kosovo are probably the reasons behind this misunderstanding. The next largest group (25,6%) thought of the EU as being mostly a free economic area. The responses of this group have probably been influenced by the discussions on the implications of the SAA for Albania, where one of the main elements consists in the gradual implementation of a free trade regime between the EU and Albania.

The largest group however thought of the EU as a union of democratic values and principles. This result corresponds to last year's results too when democracy in EU member states was deemed to be the most important goal for the EU. This is a positive result and it confirms the shift in focus from economic matters towards issues of a political nature that was also noticed in the replies to the previous questions (*see question 18*) discussed in the report. It shows that the Albanian public at large has become more aware of the real nature of the European Union and of the importance of shared values and principles amongst member states. The increasing attention paid by EU representatives to the need for improvement and consolidation of Albania's democratic institutions, on the freedom of press, the need for free elections have probably shaped the respondents' views.

Question 8: According to you EU is mostly?

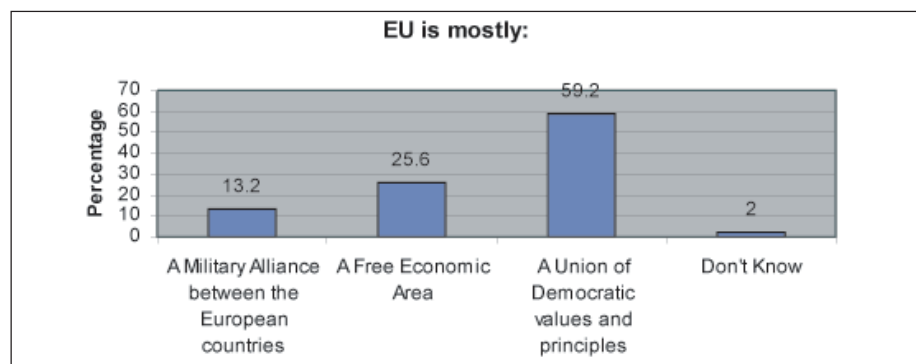


Figure 9. Awareness of EU engagement (Q8)

In order to explore the perceptions of the respondents on the EU even further, they were also asked to choose which of a number of statements

better characterized the EU. Once again the results showed an improved awareness on the part of the respondents concerning the real nature of the EU. Thus the largest group (42,7%) responded that ‘democracy, development, prosperity’ would be the best motto for the EU. Considering the choices the respondents made in the answers to the previous questions this result should not have come as a surprise.

The next largest group however characterised the EU as ‘open to all’. It is somewhat surprising that such a large portion of the respondents voted in this way given the discussions on the need to limit the Union’s further enlargement and on Turkey’s accession, which lately has not focused so much on the state of the Turkish economy or democracy as on its Muslim or ‘non-European’ identity.

The other two possible mottos received a much lower percentage of the votes, although it is easy to see why in the absence of information one would think of the EU as being best characterised by “freedom, equality and brotherhood”.

On the whole the results show that although a very significant percentage of the respondents did make the correct choice, some misunderstandings on the nature of the EU do persists. More than half the respondents hold a very simplified view on the nature of the union by stressing either its democratic or the enlargement elements to the exclusion of all the others.

Question 9: Which motto would best characterize the European Union?

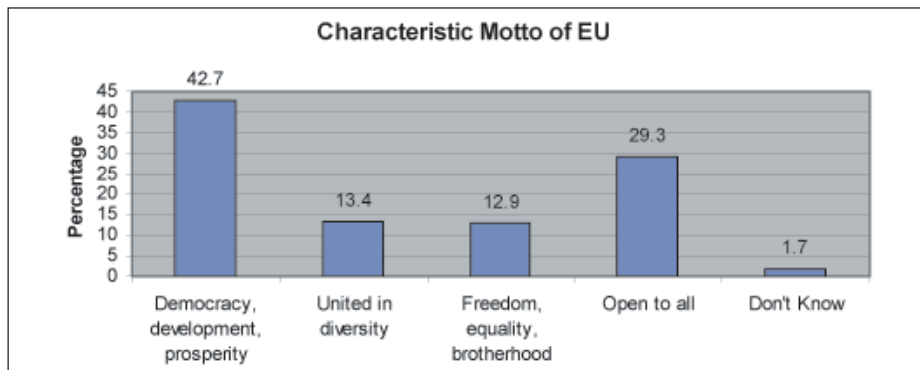


Figure 10. Characterization of EU (Q9)

III.5 Information and Awareness

The results that have been discussed until now show that misunderstandings on the nature of the EU and of the integration process are on the whole as common amongst the respondents surveyed this year as they were in previous years. This may be due to of a lack of interest on the part of the respondents or the result of lack of information on the subject of Albania's accession, which makes it all the more important to identify where the respondents get their information from and who they think bears the greatest responsibility for keeping the Albanian public informed on what is after all the most important issue for Albania's future. In addition to these issues this section of the report will also try to asses how good the basic knowledge of the respondents on different EU organisations, on Albania's membership in international organizations and institutions as well as on the signing of the SAA and its consequences.

In question 24 the respondents were asked to assign grades from 10 – 1 to a number of different sources of information. They were asked to assign grades of 10 – 9 if they received a lot of information, 8 -7 if they received a considerable amount of information, 6 – 5 if they received some information, 4 – 3 if they received almost no information and 2 – 1 if they received no information at all from any given source. As the table below shows the main source of information on the EU are still the same as in 2006: the TV and the press. The order though has been reversed with the TV scoring much higher than the press. TV also scored the lowest number of respondents who assigned grades in the 4 -3 and 2 – 1 ranges. The surprising newcomer this year was the internet that came in third. However it must be pointed out that a considerable percentage of the respondents received almost no information or no information at all from the internet. The result is quite understandable given the fact that the internet is still a relatively new and not so accessible medium in Albania. Indeed when the data was broken down according to the respondents age groups it was revealed that the internet as a source of information was far more important for the two younger groups than for the older ones. The

other significant change in the replies of this year's survey as compared to 2006 is the decline as a source of information of the EU Delegation which although it came fourth (as opposed to third in 2006) scored a dismally low percentage. On the whole it can be said that barring the TV, the press and the internet, the other sources of information scored so low as to make them practically insignificant. Up to two thirds of the respondents said that they received almost no information or no information at all from these sources.

The fact that the absolute majority of the respondents get their information from the TV, the press or the internet probably explains the misunderstandings and mistaken perceptions on the whole range of issues that have thus far been discussed. As anyone who is familiar with the Albanian press and TV can point out, these sources are not always very reliable. One has but to skip through different Albanian dailies (with or without any political affiliations) to understand how much the information varies. The same news item can be interpreted in a multitude of various ways. This has been especially evident during the recent political crisis in Albania. The same declaration by an EU representative tended to be portrayed for instance as a big success and pat on the shoulder for the government by government affiliated media or as a big disaster and sharp criticism by opposition ones. The same happens with different TV channels. To make matters worse, as the previous four surveys have shown, the members of the media often are just as confused on the issues relating to the EU or Albania's integration process.

It is reasonable to suggest that other much better qualified sources of information such as the Ministry of Integration, the EU delegation or various NGOs and institutes should have been at the forefront of the information campaign on the EU and EU integration. And yet this has apparently not been the case, at least not as far as the average citizen of Albania is concerned. It is after all unacceptable that almost 80% of the respondents have either received very little information or no information at all from the government (i.e. the Ministry of Integration). The embassies of various countries and various institutions and organizations have not

fared much better and this is also the case with the NGOs. The data also reflects on another problem: all these sources of information are more accessible to the country's elite categories surveyed in previous years, and have not paid any attention – or at least not sufficient attention – to informing the Albanian public at large.

Question 24: How much information on the European Union do you receive from the following sources?

	10 – 9 A lot of informa- tion	8 – 7 Conside- rable informa- tion	6 – 5 Some informa- tion	4 – 3 No informa- tion	2 – 1 No informa- tion at all
TV	44,1%	25%	16,4%	6,4%	7,2%
Newspapers	23,4%	24,3%	20%	14,3%	17,45
Internet	26,9%	14,9%	9,9%	8,1%	39,2%
EU Delegation in Albania	6,5%	9,1%	11,6%	12,7%	58,6%
Ministry of European Integration	6,1%	7,1%	12,2%	12,8%	61%
Organization/Institution where you work	5,2%	5,5%	4,7%	4,3%	78,8%
Embassies/International Organizations	2,7%	5,9%	8,6%	11,1%	70,7%
Research Institutes and NGOs	2,9%	6,2%	10%	12,2%	67,8%
Radio					

Table 11. Sources of Information

No major results were revealed when the data was broken down according to the respondents' age or gender barring the higher preference for the internet on the part of the younger respondents as opposed to the older ones. Any other differences that were encountered were not as significant as to allow for any far reaching conclusions. On the whole it appears that the older groups rely slightly more on the TV and the press than the

younger ones. As for the other sources of information the respondents were almost unanimous in their verdict.

The failure of the government and the EU Delegation to inform the public on the EU integration becomes even more evident in the replies to question 25. The respondents were asked to evaluate the responsibility of various institutions in providing information on the EU and the integration process. Once again they were invited to assign grades from a range of 10 – 1 where 10 – 9 meant that the institution in question bears a lot of responsibility, 8 – 7 considerable responsibility, 6 – 5 some responsibility, 4 – 3 no responsibility and 2 – 1 no responsibility at all. The government came first with 93,6% percent of the grades in the 10 – 9 and 8 – 7 ranges. This makes the failure of the government to inform the public even more poignant. The media was the second highest scorer followed closely by the EU delegation in Albania. An unexpected result was the high level of responsibility assigned by the respondents to the local government which is not as closely involved with the integration process as the central government.

The NGOs were considered as the least responsible for informing the public. This is probably due to the fact that NGOs do not yet constitute as important an institution in Albania as they should.

Question 25: Evaluate the level of responsibility that each of the following institutions has in providing information related to EU and European integration.

	10 – 9 A lot of responsibility	8 – 7 Considerable responsibility	6 – 5 Some responsibility	4 – 3 No responsibility	2 – 1 No responsibility at all
Government	85,6%	8%	3,3%	0,9%	1,5%
Local government	54,6%	22,6%	12,2%	4%	5,9%
EU Delegation in Albania	65,2%	15,5%	10,4%	4,7%	3,3%
NGOs	28,8%	33,2%	22,5%	6,3%	8,5%
Media	78,7%	13,1%	4,9%	0,9%	1,5%

Table 12. Level of Responsibility for Providing Information related to EU and EU Integration

Question 26 aimed to evaluate the success or failure of one of the methods of disseminating information on the EU and the integration process i.e. the distribution of leaflets or brochures or other informative materials. As can be seen in the table this method has not been very effective. Only 5,5% of the respondents said that they had read such materials often. An additional 10,9% had chanced upon such materials sometimes, 17,3% very rarely while the vast majority 66,3% had never read anything of the kind.

Any Material you read for EU information?	% of Total N
YES, often	5,5%
Sometimes	10,9%
Very rarely	17,3%
Never	66,3%
Don't Know	,1%
Total	100,0%

Table 13. Any material you read for information on EU or EU integration?

Results according to gender were not significantly different. On the whole it appears that female respondents were somewhat more receptive to such ways of information with a significantly higher percentage of them having read such materials sometimes or rarely, although more male than female respondents claim to have read such materials often: 7,1% as opposed to 5,8 of the female respondents. Nevertheless the vast majority of males and females had never read any such things.

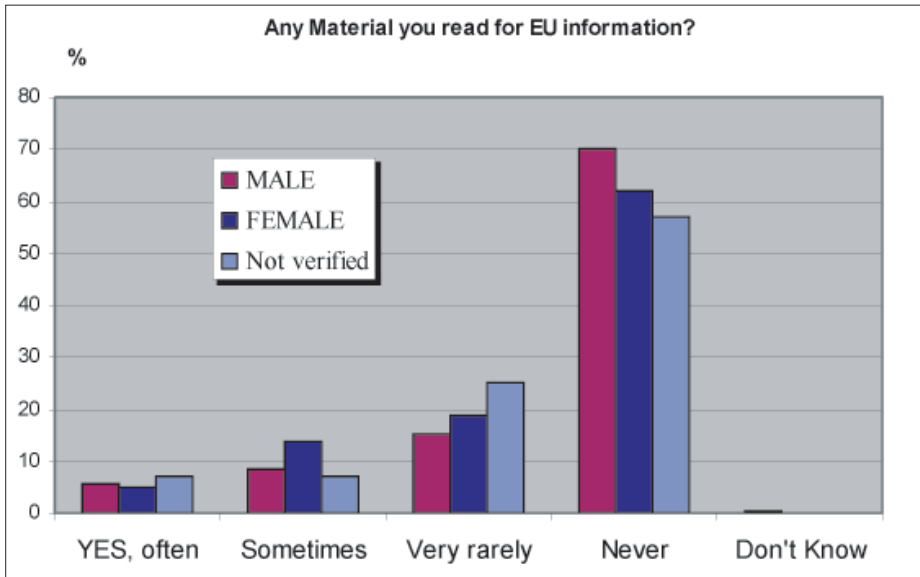


Figure 11. Personal interest of the responders on reading various informative materials about EU and EU Integration in Albania; Gender

The differences according to age groups were also minimal. The two older groups held the lowest percentage of respondents who had read such materials often; the highest percentage was amongst 25 – 35 year olds standing at 6,5%. In any case the difference between the highest and lowest scoring groups amounted to a meagre 2,3%.

The results were somewhat different for the respondents who had read such materials sometimes. The 35 – 46 year olds scored higher, followed by the youngest of the groups (respectively 12,8% and 12,1%). But this time it was the 25 – 35 age group that came last with 8,9% as opposed to 9,4% for the oldest group.

The oldest age group however held the largest percentage of respondents who had never read any such brochures or other kinds of materials with 70,9%.

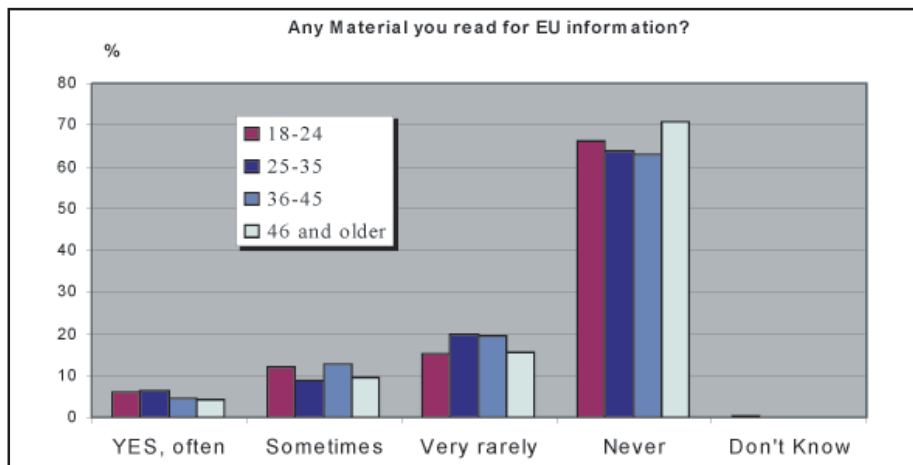


Figure 12. Personal interest of the responders on reading various informative materials about EU and EU Integration in Albania; Age Group

On the whole the differences were so small as to reduce one to splitting hairs. The conclusion that can be reached is that this method of disseminating information has not been able to reach the public. The explanations can be many and in the absence of the relevant information one can only speculate on them. On the one hand these results may imply a lack of interest on the part of the respondents. On the other they might imply a lack of serious effort on the part of those institutions that undertake such informative campaigns¹. Be that as it may, the replies to the questions that will be discussed below will reveal the levels of information on the part of the respondents concerning some information of a more basic nature on the SAA, EU institution and membership in such institutions.

As expected the absolute majority of the respondents 80,7% were aware of the signing of the SAA. This was the most significant milestone Albania has thus far achieved in its bid for EU membership and it was duly publicised as such by the government and the media. What was unexpected one might say is that roughly 20% thought the SAA had not been signed

¹ Given the higher concentration of institutions and NGOs of this kind in Tirana it would have been interesting – had the data been available – to see if there were any differences between respondents coming from different cities.

or did not know whether it had been signed. This result also confirms our assumption that the better educated categories surveyed in the previous survey would be better informed than this year's. Almost 99% of the respondents were aware of the signing of the SAA in 2006; a difference of 18 percentage points. This result also goes to show that no matter how intensive the publicity any given issue receives, it will always fail to register with a portion of the public.

Question 21: According to the information you have has the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between Albania and the European Union been signed?

Has Albania signed SAA?	N	% of Total N
YES	790	80,7%
NO	70	7,2%
Don't Know	119	12,2%
Total	979	100,0%

Table 14. Awareness of the responders on Albania signing the Stability Association Agreement (Q21)

The data according to gender revealed that the percentage of male respondents who gave a correct answer was slightly higher than that of the female respondents (a difference of 1,6%). Furthermore a significantly higher percentage of female than male respondents did not know one way or the other. On the other hand the percentage of male respondents who gave the wrong answer was almost double that of the female respondents who erred.

Gender	Albania has signed SAA	% of Total N
MALE	YES	81,3%
	NO	9,1%
	Don't Know	9,5%
	Total	100,0%
FEMALE	YES	79,7%
	NO	4,8%
	Don't Know	15,5%
	Total	100,0%

Table 15. Awareness of the responders on Albania signing the Stability Association Agreement (Q21) by Gender

When broken down according to age groups it appears that the older groups are better informed on the signing of the SAA than the younger ones. This might also go some way towards explaining the higher levels of optimism among older respondents that was observed previously. The oldest group held by far the highest percentage of correct answers; strangely it also had the highest number of incorrect answers. The younger groups however had the highest percentage of respondents who did not know. On the whole the majority in all four groups gave correct answers; a fact that goes to show that when proper care is taken in publicizing an issue the levels of awareness amongst the respondents will be higher. This conclusion is further confirmed by the results of the next question concerning the areas that are affected by the signing of the SAA.

Age Group	Albania has signed SAA	Percent
18-24	YES	76,9%
	NO	7,7%
	Don't Know	15,4%
	Total	100,0%
25-35	YES	79,8%
	NO	5,8%
	Don't Know	14,4%
	Total	100,0%
36-45	YES	83,4%
	NO	4,0%
	Don't Know	12,6%
	Total	100,0%
46 and older	YES	85,7%
	NO	10,5%
	Don't Know	3,8%
	Total	100,0%

Table 16. Awareness of the responders on Albania signing the Stability Association Agreement (Q21) by Age Group

Once again the respondents gave correct answers on a number of the affected areas that have received more press coverage or that have been emphasised by the government. It is also surprising that the respondents

in this survey had a much more positive view of the consequences of the SAA for Albania than in 2006 when 36,1% of those interviewed thought the signing of the SAA would not bring anything new to Albania. If anything this year's respondents were overly optimistic on the subject. The opening of the market which is one of the main elements of the SAA received the highest percentage of correct answers, followed by 'increases in foreign investment'. Both these elements have received a lot of publicity by the government. The third ranking element however, although the replies as far as the long term perspective is concerned, were correct, probably reflects a misunderstanding on the part of the respondents. The signing of the SAA does indeed hold the promise of an easier visa regime, but it does not automatically entail such a result. The explanation behind the answers of the respondents can probably be found in several statements on the part of the Albanian government and EU representatives on the possibility of relaxing the visa regime for the Albanians. Additionally, probably because of political considerations, successive Albanian governments have not done enough to explain to the public that the difficulties encountered by the average citizen in obtaining a visa are also the result of domestic problems, i.e. the unreliable certificate regime and so forth, as well as of EU opposition to allowing Albanians to travel to the Union. This has led many to believe that the signing of the SAA would automatically remove such obstacles.

The lowest ranking element, the development of Albanian agriculture also reflects a misunderstanding the explanation for which is probably twofold. On the one hand it probably shows that the respondents are aware of the European Union's policy of subsidizing the agricultural sector of member countries. On the other it relates to the signing of the SAA which was seen as a step in the right direction towards solving all of Albania's problems. In fact the SAA in itself does not directly lead to the development of agriculture. If anything in the short term at least it might lead to its further decline given the fact that Albania's agriculture sector – which is in a sorry state – will not be able to compete against much more developed rivals in a free market. As this results shows although the signing of the SAA was broadly publicised, its effects on Albania were never thoroughly explained to the public.

	Opening of the Market	Local Economy	Visa regime	Foreign Investment	Agriculture
YES	86,2	77,7	79,8	84,8	65,0
NO	8,2	15,1	13,1	8,7	22,9
Don't Know	5,6	7,2	7,2	6,5	12,1
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Table 17. Personal views and evaluation of various areas affected by the signing of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement

One other area where the respondents were tested concerned their knowledge of EU institutions. As can be seen in the table below the results show the same pattern of correct and incorrect answers that was encountered in the previous surveys. Most respondents correctly identified the European Parliament, the European Commission and the European Investment Bank as EU institutions and the IMF, NATO and the World Bank as non - EU institution. As far as the remaining institutions on the list are concerned however the same mistakes were made as in previous years. The EBRD, the Council of Europe and the OSCE were incorrectly identified as being EU institutions. Those interviewed in this survey seem to have been just as confused by the word Europe or European in the names of these institutions as was the case in the previous surveys.

While it is understandable that the respondents were confused as far as the EBRD or even the Council of Europe are concerned – although Serbia's presidency of the Council this year should have given the respondents a hint – it is puzzling that so many of them failed to identify the OSCE correctly. After all the OSCE has played a very active role in Albanian politics in recent years. An additional explanation for the confusion – besides the one provided above – is probably related to the similarity of advice and comment issued by this institution on the one hand and EU representatives on the other as well as to the advisory role the OSCE played in aiding the government's effort to fulfil the SAA requirements. Nevertheless the percentage of correct answers on the OSCE this year

was higher then in 2006 standing at 9,3% as opposed to a meagre 3,2% in 2006.

NATO constitutes another interesting case where although a majority of the respondents gave correct answers a considerable portion of them identified it as an EU institution. All the talk of NATO and EU membership has probably sawn some confusion among the respondents. On the other hand it shows a failure to inform the public on the part of the competent authorities. Lack of information can probably account for the confusion on the IMF too.

On the whole the percentage of correct answers given in 2007 is much lower showing that the categories surveyed last year were better informed on the subject. There were however several exceptions. The OSCE has already been mentioned above. In addition far more respondents gave correct answers on the European Commission then it was the case last year (84,2% in 2007 as opposed to 54,2% in 2006). The other notable case concerned the EBRD. An astonishing 0,0% of the respondents answered correctly in 2006 while amongst this year's respondents the percentage of correct answers stands at 8,2%.

Question 7: From what you have heard which of the following are institutions of the European Union

It is an EU institution?	European Parliament %	World Bank %	European Commission %	IMF %	NATO %	European Investment Bank %	EBRD %	The Council of Europe %	OSCE %
YES	87,8	29,2	84,2	36,7	35,9	82,5	80,9	88,7	82,7
NO	4,5	60,2	6,8	47,0	53,3	7,9	8,2	5,1	9,3
Don't Know	7,7	10,6	9,0	16,3	10,8	9,6	10,9	6,3	8,0
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Table 18. Knowledge on EU institutions (Q7)

The last area where the levels of information of the respondents were tested concerned Albania's membership in a number of international organisations. The respondents gave correct answers on all the institutions although the percentages varied and on the whole the percentage of correct answers is lower than it was in 2006. As expected the vast majority of them knew that Albania was not a member of the EU or NATO. It is however surprising that 21,9% of the respondents thought that Albania was already a member of NATO given the level of attention Albania's bid for membership in this organization has received. It could well be that the respondents have interpreted the repeated assurances on the part of the government that Albania will shortly receive an invitation to join NATO to mean that membership has already been secured.

The relatively high percentage of respondents who gave correct answers on Albania's OSCE membership becomes difficult to understand if one keeps in mind the responses to the previous question that was discussed. If the majority of the respondents think of the OSCE as an EU organization and if the majority of them are aware that Albania is not a member of the EU it follows that Albania should not be a member of the OSCE either. The same reasoning is valid for the correct answers on Albania's membership in the Council of Europe too. Based on this one can hazard a guess that the respondents were too hasty in their answers to question 7 – thus being confused by the word Europe or European – while their actual knowledge is actually on a higher level than the responses to that question would have one believe. The other rather unlikely explanation is that the respondents perceive the integration process as a step by step process whereby Albania is gradually granted membership in organization after organization until it finally becomes a full EU member.

Question 5: Is Albania a member of?

Member?	NATO	OSCE	UN	EU	WTO	The Council of Europe
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	21,9	53,7	62,5	2,1	65,4	48,0
No	70,7	32,7	27,0	94,4	18,8	35,7
Don't Know	7,4	13,7	10,5	3,5	15,8	16,3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 19. Overall awareness of Albania's membership in various international organizations (Q5)

The responses according to the gender of the respondent revealed that male respondents gave a significantly higher percentage of correct answers than the female ones on each of the institutions. The only exceptions concerned the WTO and the Council of Europe where the male respondents had the higher percentage of both correct and incorrect answers. When the responses were broken down according to the age of the respondents it appeared that the older respondents were better informed in each case. On the whole one can say that male respondents were better informed than the female ones on a range of issues and that the levels of information increased with the age of the respondents.

III.6 Analyses

As has already been mentioned the survey was based on the assumption that the better educated respondents, i.e. those in the university and higher category, would be better informed on the EU and the integration process than the less educated ones. Our sampling techniques were based upon this assumption that has to some extent been proven true already in those instances when the level of knowledge of the respondents in this survey could be compared to that of those tested in 2006. After all the vast majority of the sample surveyed in 2006 belonged to the 'university and higher' category as opposed to 52,4% for this year. Now this assumption will

also be explored within the sample that participated in this survey. Their levels of knowledge will be tested in two main areas: the respondents' awareness of international institutions and Albania's relation to them; and the respondents' knowledge of the integration process.

Albania and the EU: knowledge of various institutions

As can be seen from the table below our assumption held generally true as far as the answers to question 5 were concerned. The better educated group scored significantly better than the less educated one. The difference was especially high in the case of the OSCE. Surprisingly when asked on Albania's EU membership the better educated group had the highest percentage of correct as well as incorrect answers. Given the very small the percentage from both groups that gave incorrect answers and the very negligible difference (a mere 0,4 percentage points) it would be a bit far fetched to suggest that this result contradicts our assumption. Nevertheless it is notable that considerable percentages of respondents from both categories are confused on Albania's membership in these organizations.

Education	Is Albania a member of?	NATO	OSCE	UN	EU	WTO	Council of Europe
Up to University	Yes	24,9%	46,1%	59,2%	1,9%	62,4%	46,1%
	No	67,0%	39,3%	28,8%	93,9%	19,7%	35,9%
	Don't know	8,0%	14,6%	12,1%	4,2%	18,0%	18,0%
University and Higher	Yes	19,2%	60,7%	65,6%	2,3%	68,3%	49,9%
	No	74,1%	26,7%	25,5%	95,0%	18,0%	35,5%
	Don't know	6,7%	12,7%	8,8%	2,7%	13,6%	14,6%

Table 20. Education Level by the knowledge of Albania's membership in various international organizations

The responses on EU institutions throw a shadow of doubt on our assumption. The better educated respondents did indeed score better than the less educated ones. However the situation was reversed on two of the institutions. Thus more respondents belonging to the “up to university” category correctly identified the European Parliament as an EU institution. In this case however the difference was minimal, 0,2% thus making it rather insignificant. When asked on the European Investment Bank however the difference was greater amounting to 3,1% . The number of respondents that gave incorrect answers was also 3,0% higher for the better educated group. With the exception of these two instances however our assumption holds true and on the whole both categories gave more correct than incorrect answers. The level of their knowledge is thus generally more satisfactory for the better educated respondents. That said, it must be noted that there is much confusion on the part of significant numbers of respondents on the IMF, NATO and the World Bank. However it is precisely in these ‘difficult’ cases that the knowledge gap between the two groups becomes more evident, with the better informed respondents scoring a much higher number of correct answers.

Education Level	Is it an EU inst.?	European Parliament	World Bank	European Commission	IMF	NATO	European Investment Bank	EBRD	The Council of Europe	OSCE
Up to University	YES	87,9	34,3	83,5	41,0	42,6	84,1	81,4	88,9	86,0
	NO	4,7	54,0	7,0	41,4	44,3	6,3	7,6	4,3	6,6
	Don't Know	7,4	11,7	9,5	17,6	13,2	9,5	11,0	6,8	7,4
	Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
University and Higher	YES	87,7	24,6	84,9	32,7	29,8	81,0	80,5	88,4	79,6
	NO	4,4	65,9	6,6	52,3	61,6	9,3	8,7	5,8	11,8
	Don't Know	7,9	9,6	8,5	15,1	8,6	9,7	10,8	5,8	8,5
	Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Table 21. Knowledge on EU institutions (Q7) by Education Level

The better educated respondents had a better understanding of the nature of the EU too. A much higher percentage of them correctly identified the EU as being mostly a union of democratic values and principles, outscoring the less educated group by 6,9% point. The one area where the both groups gave a very similar percentage of answers concerned the classification of the EU as a free economic area. Slightly more than a quarter of the less educated respondents and slightly less than a quarter of the better educated ones made this choice. On the whole the results confirm our assumption. However the results also show that more than one third of the respondents, regardless of educational background, do have a wrong or very simplified impression of the EU.

Education Level	EU is mostly	Percent
Up to University	A Military Alliance between	
	the European countries	15,2
	A Free Economic Area	26,8
	A Union of Democratic values	
	and principles	55,6
	Don't Know	2,3
	Total	100,0
University and Higher	A Military Alliance between	
	the European countries	11,3
	A Free Economic Area	24,4
	A Union of Democratic values	
	and principles	62,5
	Don't Know	1,7
	Total	100,0

Table 22. Awareness of EU engagement (Q8) by Education level

When asked to choose the most appropriate motto for the EU however the differences were rather smaller. A majority from both categories made the correct choice, with the better educated respondents scoring slightly better. Roughly the same percentages of respondents from the two groups

think of the EU as being open to all, while the percentage of those who do not know is exactly the same. Although the results show that once again the better educated group scored better, the differences are too small and the fact remains that a majority of respondents do not have a correct perception of the EU.

Education Level	Characteristic Motto of EU	Percent
Up to University	Democracy, development, prosperity	42,1
	United in diversity	10,6
	Freedom, equality, brotherhood	15,9
	Open to all	29,8
	Don't Know	1,7
	Total	100,0
University and Higher	Democracy, development, prosperity	43,3
	United in diversity	16,0
	Freedom, equality, brotherhood	10,2
	Open to all	28,8
	Don't Know	1,7
	Total	100,0

Table 23. Characterization of EU (Q9) by Education Level

The same pattern can also be discerned when the reasons for the respondents' votes in favour of EU membership were analysed. Both categories gave higher importance to freedom of movement and improvement of standards of living, but there were differences in the way the two categories voted. The "up to university" respondents placed much more importance on these two reasons, respectively 48,3% and 34,3%, as opposed to the 'meagre' 35% and 30,5% they scored amongst respondents belonging to the better educated category. Another striking result was that the percentage of respondents from the "university and higher" category who believe that EU membership would strengthen democracy and the rule of law is more than two times higher than the percentage of less educated respondents who would vote in favour of EU membership for the same reason (*See Table 2.17*). One can hazard a guess

that the better educated category is somewhat more privileged than the lesser educated one when it comes to the freedom of movement and living standards thus offering an explanation for the differences in percentage points. Additionally in line with the survey's premise, the better educated group seems to be more aware that Albania has more to gain from EU membership than simply freedom of movement and improved living standards.

Education Level	Main Reason FOR Voting	Percent
Up to University	The standard of living would increase	34,3
	Albanians would be able to move freely in the EU	48,3
	Democracy and the rule of law would be strengthened	12,4
	Better morals and responsibility in politics	4,3
	Other	0,2
	Don't Know	0,5
	Total	100,0
University and Higher	The standard of living would increase	30,5
	Albanians would be able to move freely in the EU	35,0
	Democracy and the rule of law would be strengthened	25,8
	Better morals and responsibility in politics	8,0
	Other	0,6
	Total	100,0

Table 24. Main reason of voting for Albania's membership in EU by Education Level of education

On the whole, although in a limited number of questions the 'up to university' group did actually score better, the results of the questions discussed above show that our assumption holds true: the better educated respondents appear better informed than the less educated ones on Albania's membership in international organisations and on the EU. It is now time to see whether the same assumptions holds true when the respondents were asked on Albania's integration process.

Albania's Integration Process

The correlation between better education and better information on the EU integration process is obvious when the respondents were asked if Albania has signed the SAA. The differences were quite significant, with 6,7% more respondents from the 'university and higher' group being aware of the most significant step Albania has thus far taken in its accession bid. This result is especially relevant to our assumption as it seems to show that not only are the better educated respondents better informed on the more 'difficult' areas (such as the nature of the EU and so forth), but they also seem to be more susceptible to receiving information of a more basic nature such as the signing of the SAA. After all the signing of the SAA received so much publicity, as a momentous event for Albania, that it would have been hard for one to remain unaware of it, regardless of one's educational background.

Education Level	Albania has signed SAA	Percent
Up to University	YES	77,2%
	NO	8,6%
	Don't Know	14,2%
	Total	100,0%
University and Higher	YES	83,9%
	NO	5,8%
	Don't Know	10,3%
	Total	100,0%

Table 25. Awareness of the responders on Albania signing the Stability Association Agreement (Q21) by Education Level

As far as Albania's readiness to join the EU is concerned, on the other hand the differences in the answers given by the two categories were much smaller (*See Table 26*). Nevertheless our assumption still held true. More respondents belonging to the "up to university" category think the

country is ready for accession as opposed to the better educated group (a difference of 3,7 percentage points). The number of respondents who do not know is also slightly higher in the less educated group (a difference of 0,3%). Once again these results are in line with our premise that the better educated respondents would have a more thorough understanding of what the integration process entails.

Education Level	Albania is Ready for EU?	Percent
Up to University	YES	15,9%
	NO	80,7%
	Don' Know	3,4%
	Total	100,0%
University and Higher	YES	12,2%
	NO	84,7%
	Don' Know	3,1%
	Total	100,0%

Table 26. Readiness of Albania for EU membership by Education Level

The situation is the same for the answers to question 15. Once again the better educated respondents show a higher level of awareness and maturity. It must be noted that a majority of respondents from both categories gave a negative answer to question 15, but the percentage of 'No' voters was higher among the better educated group (*See Table 27*). These significant differences (respectively 7,7% for 'No' and 6,5% for 'Yes') do once again show a higher level of maturity and objectivity on the part of the better educated group. This category seems to be more aware that it is unlikely that the EU would offer Albania any preferential treatment and that the integration process depends on Albania's capability to carry out the reforms that are needed.

Education Level	EU Accepts Albania earlier?	Percent
Up to University	YES	42,9%
	NO	48,5%
	Don't Know	8,6%
	Total	100,0%
University and Higher	YES	36,4%
	NO	56,2%
	Don't Know	7,4%
	Total	100,0%

Table 27. Personal views of the responders on EU's readiness in accepting Albania to become a full member; Education Level

The expectations of the better and less educated groups on the year when Albania will gain EU membership are notably similar although the “university and higher” group seems to be the more ‘pessimistic’ of the two. The fact that more respondents belonging to the “up to university” category than respondents from the “university and higher” category believe Albania will join the EU in 2010 goes to show that this later group is better informed than the former. All in all however both groups share more or less the same levels of optimism and maturity concerning the speed of the integration process, with the differences in percentage points being minimal. Nevertheless although the differences are not so clear cut as one might have wished, the results do once again confirm our assumption.

Expected year for membership	Education Level	
	Up to University	University and Higher
2010	13,1	11,2
2015	36,6	37,3
2020	23,3	23,8
After 2020	19,5	20,0
Albania will never be a EU member state	3,8	3,5
Don't know	3,8	4,2
Total	100,0	100,0

Table 28. The time thought by the responders when Albania will enter in EU; Education Level

The assessments of the progress made by Albania compared to last year (i.e. 2006) according to categories to some extent seem to contradict the survey's assumption that the better educated group would have a better awareness of the integration process and the country's progress. On the whole the "university and higher" category has a rather more rosy view of the progress of Albania. 7,7% of them think the country has made a lot of progress as opposed to 5,4% in the less educated group. When it comes to the percentage of respondents who think Albania has progressed 'somewhat' the difference is smaller, leading one to assume that a majority in both groups has a reasonably objective view. On the other hand the "university and higher" group also contains a significantly higher percentage of pessimists who believe Albania has not progressed at all. It is reasonable to assume that the local elections of February 2007 which were perceived as successful by Albanian standards are probably the reason behind these results; the optimistic tone the government has struck when discussing the country's EU integration might be another one.

Education Level	How much Albania has Progressed Compared to Last Year?	
Up to University	A lot	5,4%
	Somewhat	42,4%
	A little	37,8%
	Not at all	12,5%
	Don't Know	1,9%
	Total	100,0%
University and Higher	A lot	7,7%
	Somewhat	43,4%
	A little	30,8%
	Not at all	16,2%
	Don't Know	1,9%
	Total	100,0%

Table 29. Evaluation of the progress made by Albania towards EU integration; Education Level

Any optimism about the country's progress caused by the replies discussed above was tempered when the respondents were asked to compare Albania's progress to that of other countries that are hoping to gain membership. On the whole the results were very similar for both groups with the differences often amounting to no more than fractions of a percentage point. While the responses on Turkey, Croatia – or even FYROM or Montenegro – may be understandable, those on Serbia and Bosnia & Herzegovina do present us with a puzzle. After all the problems Albania faces pale in comparison to those of, for instance Serbia. Nevertheless the results do confirm our assumption. Fewer respondents from the better educated groups think that Serbia has progressed more than Albania and the same can be said in the case of Bosnia. The responses on Macedonia also show that the better educated group is better informed. Turkey however constitutes a special case. More respondents belonging to the less educated category than the better educated one think that Turkey has progressed more than Albania, although the difference is minimal. The resistance Turkey's accession bid has encountered is probably the reason behind this result.

Albania has Progressed better than...							
Education Level		FYROM	Croatia	Serbia	Bosnia & Herzegovina	Montenegro	Turkey
Up to University	YES	24,8	10,0	37,7	38,4	23,1	13,6
	NO	65,0	80,0	52,1	46,5	67,5	78,9
	Don't Know	10,2	10,0	10,2	15,1	9,3	7,4
	Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
University and Higher	YES	22,6	8,6	40,4	38,9	27,0	14,6
	NO	65,0	82,5	49,9	45,1	63,4	78,3
	Don't Know	12,5	9,0	9,7	16,0	9,5	7,0
	Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Table 30. Views of the responders on Albania's progress better than various countries towards EU integration; Education Level

IV. METHODOLOGY

This study is the fifth annual report since September 2002 when the Albanian Institute for International Studies (AIIS) issued its first survey report within the framework of its project “European Integration – Perceptions and Realities”. In the first four surveys and the reports based upon them the goal was to assess the awareness and perceptions on the European Union and Albania’s accession process within five target groups which form the country’s elite. The assumption behind this choice of target groups was obvious: the elites were assumed to have a better level of awareness and information on the integration process and on the consequences the process entails. This, coupled with the higher levels of influence these groups can exert on the government and the public, makes them play a primary role in shaping Albania’s EU integration process, thus making a study of their attitudes and perceptions quite an interesting subject for the AIIS to study. By surveying the same groups in four consequent surveys one could hope to gather sufficient data in order to enable the AIIS and all those actors involved in the integration process to evaluate the changes in the attitudes of these groups towards Albania’s accession. This year on the other hand the AIIS decided to change its approach somewhat and survey the Albanian public at large. The reasons behind this change in choice of target groups were twofold. Firstly, it would be useful and of interest to evaluate how the average citizens of Albania judge the country’s integration process; how aware are they of the consequences of the integration process and just as important, what do they expect to gain from it. After all it is all very well for the country’s elite to support Albania’s accession and to influence the path Albania takes in its accession to the EU, but this process can never be successful if the views of the average citizens are not taken into account and if the ordinary Albanians do not stand behind their government as it

attempts to undertake the much needed reforms that will hopefully take Albania into the EU. Secondly the survey aimed to assess the differences in attitudes and perceptions between the average citizens and the country's elite. That said, it would be highly misleading and it might lead to grave misunderstandings if one were to presume that the "average citizens" form one uniform and homogenous block, because they do not. The respondents differed from each other in age, gender, employment status and educational background. Accordingly some attention will be paid to the differences in perception and attitudes that respondents belonging to any of these categories have.

It is also important to point out that this year's survey was conducted roughly one year after the signing of the SAA by Albania, an event that has probably raised the levels of optimism among the respondents. At the same time the political tensions in Albania at the time of the survey and the critical comments by EU representatives concerning these developments have probably served as a note of caution that the road ahead is still long and fraught with difficulties. On the international aspect, the survey was conducted at a time when the debate on the capacity of the EU to handle an additional enlargement, the so-called "absorption capacity", and the debate on the need to strengthen and consolidate EU institutions before additional members can be taken in have resumed a new vigour as the result of the recent additions to the EU. This has in all likelihood played a role in shaping the respondents' perceptions and views on the European Union and Albania's European perspective. One further element that has in all probability influenced perceptions are the discussions on Turkey's accession which have again assumed centre stage as a result of the coming to power of parties and politicians in a number of EU member states that have a less than supportive, if not outright hostile, attitude towards Turkey's EU perspective. In order to achieve the project's goals the AIIS team set itself the following objectives:

- Assess the perceptions, expectations and attitudes towards the EU
- Evaluate the levels of awareness and perceptions of the respondents with regards to the integration process

- Where applicable, assess the differences in perceptions, expectations, levels of information and attitudes between: a) different categories of respondents, and b) between this year's respondents and those of the 2006 survey
- Assess the familiarity of the respondents with international organisations and institutions in general and EU organisations and institutions in particular
- Identify the main sources of information on the EU for the respondents

IV.1 Survey Design

The questionnaire used for this survey is very similar to the one used in 2006 and it consists of four parts: 1) general information on the respondents, 2) general information on the EU, 3) EU integration process and 4) sources of information on the EU. There were some modifications which on the whole do not constitute a major departure from the questionnaire used with last year's respondents and do allow for comparisons between the results of the two surveys. In line with our assumption that this year's respondents are generally less informed on the EU and the EU integration process the questions were somewhat simplified. The other significant difference is that for a number of questions this questionnaire aimed to provide answers of a qualitative rather quantitative nature as was the case in the 2006 survey. Furthermore several questions used in last year's survey were not deemed relevant for this year and were thus removed; others were added that aimed to evaluate the importance the respondents place on Albania's EU membership and the view of the respondents' on the progress Albania has made in its integration process as compared to other countries that find themselves in a similar position.

As in previous years the questionnaire was prepared by the AIIS survey team. It contains 11 pages, 26 questions both closed and open ended. Differently from previous surveys this year all the data is presented in percentages.

IV.2 Sampling Procedures and Fieldwork

The fieldwork for the survey was completed during the month of June 2007 and in line with the aims of this year's survey the respondents were chosen at random and not from any specific categories. This allowed the AIIS to obtain data of a more representative nature than was the case in previous years. Once again the survey involved respondents from Albania's ten major cities. As mentioned above the respondents do not constitute one homogenous block, but can be divided into different groups or categories in accordance with their employment status, educational background, age and gender.

These categories can be summed up as follows:

Employment status

- Employed
- Unemployed
- Students
- Pensioners

Educational Background

- Up to university
- University and higher

Age groups

- 18 – 24 years of age
- 25 – 35 years of age
- 36 – 45 years of age
- 46 – 55 years of age
- Over 55 years of age

Not all the abovementioned categories received the same level of attention in the survey. In line with the assumption that has underlined all the AIIS surveys on “EU Integration – Perceptions and Realities” (in other words, that better educated respondents would have a better understanding and awareness of the integration process) the survey paid more attention to

exploring the differences in replies between respondents belonging to the “up to university” and “university and higher” categories. This does not mean that no attention at all will be paid to the differences in replies between respondents with different employment status or respondents belonging to different age groups or gender; where applicable and of interest these differences will also be explored.

IV.3 Limitations and Strengths of the Survey

This survey marks a departure from the four previous AIIS surveys carried out since September 2002. For the first time this survey can be considered as a public survey in the traditional sense of the word and the results can be used to show the perceptions and knowledge of the Albanian public at large. The sampling size for each of the groups was sufficient to allow for statistical analysis for the groups in question.

One limitation relates to the sampling methodology and its implementation, that were carried out in the absence of accurate information on the percentage of the population made up by the groups surveyed this year.

That said it must also be pointed out that the survey had some major strengths too. The fact that this is the fifth time a survey of this nature was carried out meant that the AIIS team could rely on a considerable level of experience and efficiency. The questionnaire bears witness to this fact: it was designed to be short and to the point and of a conversational nature thus making the respondents feel at ease and eliciting frank and candid answers. The rating scale used, on a scale of 1 to 10, which corresponds to the Albanian grading system, meant that the respondents were familiar with it and had no difficulties in assigning grades.

IV.4 Sample Description

General Sample

The general sample reflects a rough equilibrium between males and females with the male respondents slightly outnumbering the female ones (*See Table 31*). This does approximate the gender distribution of Albania thus making it representative of the population at large.

Identification No		
Gender	N	% of Total N
MALE	501	50,4%
FEMALE	466	46,8%
Not verified	28	2,8%
Total	995	100,0%

Table 31. Gender distribution of the responders

Furthermore in line with our goal to make the survey as representative as possible the respondents were chosen from various social categories (*See Table 32*). However, given the fact that some of the categories could in fact be viewed as sub-categories, and that these sub-categories by themselves represented a negligible percentage of those interviewed a further regrouping was done which resulted in four larger groups defined by their employment status: employed 55,7%; unemployed 17,0%; students 23,0% and pensioners 4,3%.

Current Employment Status (RE-GROUPED)*	N	% of Total N
Employed	554	55,7%
Unemployed	169	17,0%
Student	229	23,0%
Pensioner	43	4,3%
Total	995	100,0%

Table 32. Employment status

*Re-Grouping the “Current Employment Status: Employed-Student; Owner and Self-Employee have been added to “Employed” Housewife (husband) has been added to “Unemployed”

In accordance with our premise that a better educated respondent would have a better awareness and knowledge of the EU and Albania's integration process, the respondents were also divided according to their educational background. Thus slightly more than half the respondents held a university degree (50,1%), while a small percentage held post-graduate degrees too (2,3%). Of the remainder of the sample the absolute majority had completed the middle school and high school and only a negligible 0,2% had not gone past the elementary school (*See Figure 13.*). In order to somewhat simplify matters a further regrouping was done, thus dividing the respondents into two larger categories: 1) up to university, and 2) university and higher. This year's sample is in sharp contrast to the general sample interviewed in the previous survey in 2006, where the vast majority of the respondent (namely 88,5) held university degrees while many also held post graduate diplomas. The percentage of female respondents with a university or postgraduate degree was considerably higher than that of the male respondents (respectively 53% and 44,5%).

*Re-Grouping the "Education Level":

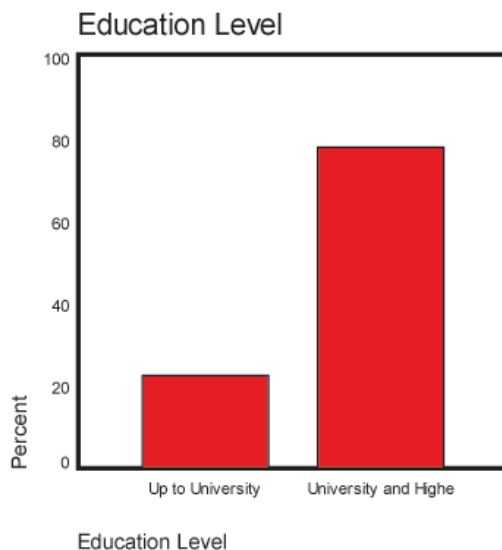


Figure 13. Educational Level- Regrouped

The largest percentage of those belonging to the “up to university” group were employed (62,2%). The number of employed respondents belonging to this group is actually higher than that of employed respondents who do hold a university or post-graduate degree. Any further comparisons or deductions on these bases however would be misleading since a significant percentage of respondents belonging to the “university and higher” group are students. Nevertheless the fact remains that the largest number of unemployed respondents does not hold a university degree, while only a small percentage of those who do hold a university or post graduate degree are unemployed (*Table 33*).

Current Employment Status	Education Level						Table Total		
	Up to University			University and Higher					
	Col %	Count	Row %	Col %	Count	Row %	Col %	Count	Row %
Employed	62,2%	294	53,2%	49,7%	259	46,8%	55,7%	554	100,0%
Unemployed	30,4%	144	85,2%	4,8%	25	14,8%	17,0%	169	100,0%
Student	2,3%	11	4,8%	41,8%	218	95,2%	23,0%	229	100,0%
Pensioner	5,1%	24	55,8%	3,6%	19	44,2%	4,3%	43	100,0%
Table Total	100,0%	473	47,6%	100,0%	521	52,4%	100,0%	995	100,0%

Table 33. Education level by current employment status

The majority of the respondents were young with more than half the respondent belonging to the 18 - 24 and 25 – 35 age groups. Whereas in the 2006 survey the 25 – 35 age group was the largest, this time it is the 18 – 24 age group that is better represented. Given the young age of Albania’s population this only goes towards making the general sample more representative of the population at large. In any case the remaining two age groups are also adequately represented. The female respondents are significantly better represented than the males in the two younger age groups (respectively 52,5% and 54,4% females and 44,4% and 43,1% males). The majority of the respondents holding a university or post graduate degree belong to the 18 – 24 age-group (namely 47,4 %). Less

than one third of the respondents belonging to this age-group do not hold a university or post graduate degree. The 25-35 age group contains the second largest group of respondents holding university or post graduate degrees (23,2%). The number of respondents belonging to the two older age-groups who also belong to the “university or higher” category is almost equal.

List of Tables

Table 1. Voting For/Against EU Membership for Albania by Education Level	21
Table 2. Personal importance of Albania's integration in EU by Education Level ...	23
Table 3. Importance on Strategic Partners	26
Table 4. Benefits of Integration	31
Table 5. The time thought by the responders when Albania will enter in EU; Gender.....	33
Table 6. The time thought by the responders when Albania will enter in EU; Age Group.....	34
Table 7. The time thought by the responders when Albania will enter in EU; Current Employment Status.....	34
Table 8. Views of the responders on Albania's progress better than various countries towards EU integration.....	36
Table 9. Importance of Factors of Accession.....	39
Table 10. Personal views of specific areas where Albania should focus mostly	41
Table 11. Sources of Information.....	46
Table 12. Level of Responsibility for Providing Information related to EU and EU Integration.....	47
Table 13. Any material you read for information on EU or EU integration?.....	48
Table 14. Awareness of the responders on Albania signing the Stability Association Agreement (Q21).....	51
Table 15. Awareness of the responders on Albania signing the Stability Association Agreement (Q21) by Gender.....	51
Table 16. Awareness of the responders on Albania signing the Stability Association Agreement (Q21) by Age Group.....	52
Table 17. Personal views and evaluation of various areas affected by the signing of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement.....	54
Table 18. Knowledge on EU institutions (Q7).....	55
Table 19. Overall awareness of Albania's membership in various international organizations (Q5).....	57
Table 20. Education Level by the knowledge of Albania's membership in various international organizations.....	58
Table 21. Knowledge on EU institutions (Q7) by Education Level.....	59
Table 22. Awareness of EU engagement (Q8) by Education level.....	60
Table 23. Characterization of EU (Q9) by Education Level.....	61

Table 24. Main reason of voting for Albania's membership in EU by Education Level of education.....	62
Table 25. Awareness of the responders on Albania signing the Stability Association Agreement (Q21) by Education Level.....	63
Table 26. Readiness of Albania for EU membership by Education Level.....	64
Table 27. Personal views of the responders on EU's readiness in accepting Albania to become a full member; Education Level.....	65
Table 28. The time thought by the responders when Albania will enter in EU; Education Level.....	65
Table 29. Evaluation of the progress made by Albania towards EU integration; Education Level.....	66
Table 30. Views of the responders on Albania's progress better than various countries towards EU integration; Education Level.....	67
Table 31. Gender distribution of the responders.....	73
Table 32. Employment status.....	73
Table 33. Education level by current employment status.....	75

List of Figures

Figure 1. Voting For/Against EU Membership for Albania.....	20
Figure 2. Personal importance of Albania's integration in EU (Q10).....	22
Figure 3. Main reason of voting for Albania's membership in EU.....	24
Figure 4. Main reason of voting against Albania's membership in EU.....	24
Figure 5. Readiness of Albania for EU membership.....	28
Figure 6. Personal views of the responders on EU's readiness in accepting Albania to become a full member.....	29
Figure 7. The time thought by the responders when Albania will enter in EU.....	32
Figure 8. Evaluation of the progress made by Albania towards EU integration	35
Figure 9. Awareness of EU engagement (Q8).....	42
Figure 10. Characterization of EU (Q9).....	43
Figure 11. Personal interest of the responders on reading various informative materials about EU and EU Integration in Albania; Gender.....	49
Figure 12. Personal interest of the responders on reading various informative materials about EU and EU Integration in Albania; Age Group.....	50
Figure 13. Educational Level- Regrouped.....	74

QUESTIONNAIRE

PART I: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

General Information

Thank you for the time and collaboration.

First, I would like to ask some general questions that will help use in analyzing the data according to age groups and social characteristics.

1. MARK THE GENDER OF THE INTERVIEWEE

1. ☐ Male
2. ☐ Female

2. Employment Status:

Employed	1
Unemployed	2
Student	3
Pensioner	4
Housewife (husband)	5
Other (specify) _____	6

3. Education:

Elementary Education	1
Middle School Education	2
High School Education	3
University Education	4
Postgraduate Education	5
Non-Educated	6

4. Age Group:

18 – 24 yrs old	1
25 – 35 yrs old	2
36 – 45 yrs old	3
46 – 55 yrs old	4
Over 55 yrs old	5

General Information about EU

Now I would like us to talk in general about a number of international organizations.

5. Now I will mention some international organizations and will ask if Albania is a member of these organizations.

Is Albania a member of:

1	NATO	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> No	99 <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know
2	OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe)	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> No	99 <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know
3	UN (United Nations)	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> No	99 <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know
4	European Union (EU)	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> No	99 <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know
5	World Trade Organization (WTO)	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> No	99 <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know
6	The Council of Europe	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> No	99 <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know

6. Various people think that Albania needs to strengthen its ties with various countries or organizations. According to you, how much importance should the Albanian government place in strengthening the relations with the following states or organizations? Please, evaluate on a scale from 1 to 10, bearing in mind that the higher number, the more importance, in your opinion, the Government should place in strengthening the ties. Thus, an evaluation of 1 means that “Albania should pay no attention whatsoever” and an evaluation of 10 means “should pay much attention”.

1	EU (European Union)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	NATO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3	UN (United Nations)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4	Italy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5	Greece	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6	Germany	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7	France	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8	USA (United States of America)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9	United Kingdom (England)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10	Turkey	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	Macedonia	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
12	Serbia	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
13	Croatia	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
14	Montenegro	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
15	Kosovo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
16	Other, specify _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

7. From what you have heard, which of the following institutions are institutions of the European Union?

1	European Parliament	₁ <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	₂ <input type="checkbox"/> No	₉₉ <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know
2	World Bank	₁ <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	₂ <input type="checkbox"/> No	₉₉ <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know
3	European Commission	₁ <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	₂ <input type="checkbox"/> No	₉₉ <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know
4	IMF (International Monetary Fund)	₁ <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	₂ <input type="checkbox"/> No	₉₉ <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know
5	NATO	₁ <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	₂ <input type="checkbox"/> No	₉₉ <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know
6	European Investment Bank	₁ <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	₂ <input type="checkbox"/> No	₉₉ <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know
7	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)	₁ <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	₂ <input type="checkbox"/> No	₉₉ <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know
8	The Council of Europe	₁ <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	₂ <input type="checkbox"/> No	₉₉ <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know
9	OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe)	₁ <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	₂ <input type="checkbox"/> No	₉₉ <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know

8. According to you, EU is mostly?
(ONE ANSWER ONLY)

A military alliance between the European countries	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
A Free Economic Area	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
A union of democratic values and principles	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
I DON'T KNOW	99 <input type="checkbox"/>

9. Which motto would best characterize the European Union?
(ONE ANSWER ONLY)

Democracy, development, prosperity	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
United in diversity	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
Freedom, Equality, Brotherhood	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
Open to all	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
I DON'T KNOW	99 <input type="checkbox"/>

EU Integration Process

Now we will talk for a few minutes about Albania's European integration process.

10. How important is to you personally Albania's integration in the European Union?

Very important	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
Important, but not a priority	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
Not at all important	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
I DON'T KNOW	99 <input type="checkbox"/>

11. If a referendum were held tomorrow regarding Albania's membership in the European Union, how would you vote? Would vote for accession, or against?

1. ☐ For
 2. ☐ Against GO TO QUESTION 13
 99. ☐ I DON'T KNOW GO TO QUESTION 14

12. What would be the main reason why you would vote For:
 (ONLY FOR THOSE WHO WOULD VOTE FOR)

The standard of living would increase	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
Albanians would be able to move freely in the EU	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
Democracy and the rule of law would be strengthened	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
Better morals and responsibility in politics	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Specify): _____	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
I DON'T KNOW	99 <input type="checkbox"/>

13. What would be the main reason why you would vote Against:
 (ONLY FOR THOSE WHO WOULD VOTE AGAINST)

Prices would go up	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
The standing of the Albanian businesses would be weakened	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
The Albanian identity would be endangered	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
Foreigners will take the best properties/jobs	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Specify): _____	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
I DON'T KNOW	99 <input type="checkbox"/>

14. According to you, is Albania ready for EU Membership?

1. ☐ Yes GO TO QUESTION 15
 2. ☐ No
 99. ☐ I DON'T KNOW

15. Do you think EU should accept Albania even before it is ready to become a full member?

1. ☐ Yes
 2. ☐ No
 99. ☐ I DON'T KNOW

16. According to you, how much has Albania progressed in the European integration process compared to last year:

A lot	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
Somewhat	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
A little	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
Not at all	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
I DON'T KNOW	99 <input type="checkbox"/>

17. Do you think Albania has made more progress in the process of European integration than:

Macedonia	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> No	99 <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know
Croatia	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> No	99 <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know
Serbia	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> No	99 <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know
Bosnia & Herzegovina	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> No	99 <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know
Montenegro	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> No	99 <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know
Turkey	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> No	99 <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know

18. In which of these areas should Albania focus more in order to be integrated in the EU:
 (ONE ANSWER ONLY)

Economic development	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
War on corruption and organized crime	2 <input type="checkbox"/>

Improvement of the living standard	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
Reforms in the legal system	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Election processes	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Decentralization	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
Other, specify _____	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
I DON'T KNOW	99 <input type="checkbox"/>

19. There are different opinions about the benefit that Albania's EU accession might bring. According to you, how much will Albania benefit in the following areas? Evaluate with 1 to 10, bearing in mind that the higher the number, the bigger you think the benefit is.

1	Development of democracy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	Economic development	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3	Prosperity/Wellbeing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4	Strengthening Rule of Law	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5	Free movement in EU countries	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6	More responsible and moral politics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7	Other, indicate what _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

20. Albania's accession in the EU depends on many factors. According to you, how important are the following factors? Evaluate on a 1 to 10 scale, bearing in mind that the higher the number, the more important you consider the factor to be.

1	Albanian politics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	The Albanian economy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3	Situation in the region	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5	Religious composition	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6	Corruption	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7	Progress of the decentralization process	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8	Organized crime and trafficking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9	Dysfunctioning of the rule of law	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10	Free and fair elections	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	Other, specify_____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

21. According to the information you have, has the Stabilization and Association Agreement between Albania and European Union been signed?

1. ☐ Yes

2. ☐ No

99. ☐ I DON'T KNOW

22. Do you think the signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement affects the:

Opening of the market	₁ <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	₂ <input type="checkbox"/> No	₉₉ <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know
Strengthening of competition in the local economy	₁ <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	₂ <input type="checkbox"/> No	₉₉ <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know
An easier visa regime	₁ <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	₂ <input type="checkbox"/> No	₉₉ <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know
Increases in foreign investment	₁ <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	₂ <input type="checkbox"/> No	₉₉ <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know
The development of Albanian agriculture	₁ <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	₂ <input type="checkbox"/> No	₉₉ <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know

23. According to you, Albania will enter the European Union within the year:

2010	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
2015	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
2020	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
After 2020	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Albania will never be a European Union member state	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
I DON'T KNOW	99 <input type="checkbox"/>

Sources of Information about the EU

24. A great number of sources offer information about the EU. How much information about the European Union do you receive from the following? Evaluate from 1 to 10, where 1- I receive no information, 10- I receive a lot of information. Thus, the higher the number, the more information you receive from that source.

1	Television	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	Radio	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3	Newspapers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4	Internet	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5	The EU Delegation in Albania	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6	Ministry of European Integration	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7	Organization/Institution where you work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8	Embassies/International Organizations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9	Research Institutes and NGOs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10	Other, indicate what _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

25. Evaluate the level of responsibility that each of the following institutions has in providing information related to EU and European integration. Please, evaluate on a scale from 1 to 10, keeping in mind that the higher the number, the higher the level of responsibility of the institution. Thus, an evaluation of 1 means that the institution is not responsible to provide information and an evaluation of 10 means that the institution has much responsibility to inform.

1	Government	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	Local Government	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3	European Union (EU Delegation in Tirana)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4	NGOs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5	Media	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6	Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

26. Various institutions distribute brochures and other informative materials about the EU and European integration in Albania. Have you happened to read or look through any of them?

Yes, often	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
Sometimes	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
Very rarely	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
Never	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
I DON'T KNOW	99 <input type="checkbox"/>